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THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE,

FROM 1574 TO 1610.

VOL. IV.

Strahan and Preston,
Printers-Street, London.

THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE,

FROM THE

ACCESSION OF HENRY THE THIRD,

IN 1574,

TO THE

DEATH OF HENRY THE FOURTH,

IN 1610.

PRECEDED BY

A VIEW OF THE CIVIL, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE,

BETWEEN THE MIDDLE, AND THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY;

AND FOLLOWED BY

A VIEW OF THE STATE OF EUROPE

AT THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

BY SIR N. WILL^M. WRAXALL, BART.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES,
IN THE STRAND.
1814.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

AGE OF HENRY THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

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CHAP. I.

1574—1589.

Prerogatives of the French kings.

THE prerogatives enjoyed and exercised, as well by Henry the Third, as by all the kings of France his predecessors, during the course of the sixteenth century, might be said to approach nearly to that species of power, which we justly denominate arbitrary and unlimited.

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limited. Louis the Eleventh, the Tiberius of France, who combined in his character greater vices and greater talents, than were perhaps ever seen united on the throne in one man; had, by the oppression and destruction of the nobility, erected the despotism of the crown upon their ruins. The people became gainers by the exchange of a single tyrant, instead of many: for, it would be equally absurd and false to suppose, that at any period since the elevation of the family of Capet, and the formation of the feudal system, the nation collectively was possessed of civil liberty, guaranteed by laws against royal and aristocratic encroachment. Almost all the odious branches of prerogative, exercised in England by the princes of the house of Tudor, and wrested from those of Stuart in the succeeding century, were vested by long prescription in the French monarchs. The ablest civilians, the gravest writers, and the wisest magistrates, who flourished between the accession of Henry the Second in 1547, and the death of Henry the Third in 1589, agreed in recognizing the unlimited powers of the crown. "The kings of France," says Cayet, a contemporary author, "do not resemble the Polish sovereigns, and "others who swear at their election to observe "the laws made by those who have elected "them: but on the contrary, they have the su- "preme and absolute authority over their peo- "ple. On their will depend all the delibera- "tions of peace and war, the taxes and tributes, "the

Unlimited power, exercised by them.

"the distribution of benefices, offices, governments, and magistrates[a]." It seems scarcely possible to describe despotism in clearer colours. Charles the Ninth, when he had hardly passed the limits of childhood, did not hesitate to say to the parliament of Paris, composed of the most respectable individuals for age, virtue, dignity, and talents; "It is for you to obey my orders, without presuming to examine them; for I know better than you, what is the custom of the kingdom, and what order and decorum demand[b]." Whatever indignation such a speech might excite in the bosoms of his audience, it produced no remonstrance, nor reclamation on the part of the parliament.

Language of Charles the Ninth,

When the Protestant princes of the German empire presumed in 1586, to represent to Henry the Third, the injustice of violating his own edicts, granting liberty of conscience to his Hugonot subjects; he replied, in presence of the whole court, in these words; "It belongs to me alone, to judge according to my prudence, of what may contribute to the public welfare; to make laws for procuring it; to interpret those laws, to change or to abolish them, as I shall judge proper: I have done it hitherto, and I shall do it in future[c]." Even in the memorable assembly of the States General, held at Blois, two years afterwards,

and of Henry the Third.

[a] Chron. Novenn. vol. i. p. 4.

[b] Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, vol. iii. p. 27. Brantome, vol. iv. p. 34.

[c] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 609.

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although he professed his readiness to abide by the determinations which he should embrace, in conjunction with the delegates of the nation; yet he did not omit to state, that such a condescension was the pure effect of his own desire to contribute to the felicity of his people. He even apologized for so strong a deviation from the conduct of his predecessors; and obviated the reproaches which might be made him, for subjecting himself to the laws which he had previously ordained [d]. Montluc, Davila, Chiverny, Villeroi, and almost all the other writers of that period, many of whom filled the highest legal or civil employments, when speaking of the royal authority, regard it as paramount to law, and superior to any controul.

Arbitrary imprisonment.

Among the branches of prerogative most frequently exercised, was that of arbitrary imprisonment. No rank, profession, nor station were exempt, or protected from it; and the causes or pretexts upon which it was enforced, were so various, that they might be said to include every species of offence. Treason or heresy were the most ordinary; and suspicion alone, independant of proof, was sufficient to condemn to a long and severe captivity, any subject, however elevated by public services, or illustrious from birth. D'Andelot, colonel-general of the French infantry, and brother to the celebrated Coligni, being questioned by Henry the Second, in 1539, respecting his belief

Under Henry the Second.

[d] De Thou, vol. x. p. 301.

of

of the real presence in the Eucharist; and having replied in a manner displeasing to that orthodox, tho' licentious monarch, was immediately sent prisoner to the castle of Melun. He was, it is true, speedily released, at the powerful intercession of his uncle, the Constable Montmorenci: but even the office of a magistrate, and the dignity of a court of justice, could not protect from a similar treatment, several members of the parliament of Paris. The two Presidents, du Bourg, and du Faur, suspected of holding heretical doctrines, were seized while exercising their judicial functions, in their seats; and three others were arrested in their houses [e]. Under the following reign, in 1560, Louis, Prince of Condé, though allied to the royal blood, and attending the convocation of the States General, to which he had been invited by assurances of safety on the part of the crown, was notwithstanding arrested, and committed to custody. The case was rendered still stronger, by the consideration that Francis the Second, who authorized so violent an act of authority, had not attained to manhood; and was in the strict sense of the term, a minor, when he ventured upon the measure [f]. Charles the Ninth, or more properly, Catherine of Medicis, availing herself of his power, as he lay expiring; did not scruple in 1574, to send the Marshals Montmorenci and Cossé, to the Bastile, on suspicions, never clearly ascertained, of their being privy to the

Francis the Second.

Charles the Ninth.

[e] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 84.
[f] Davila, p. 73.

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design of her youngest son, the Duke of Alenson, to withdraw from court. Nor did the high quality of that prince himself, who became, after the decease of Charles the Ninth, presumptive heir to the crown, preserve him from experiencing the same treatment. He, as well as Henry, King of Navarre, first prince of the blood, were long detained captive in the castle of the Louvre, by Henry the Third, from motives only of state precaution.[g]

Henry the Third.

Creation of tribunals, for the trial of offences.

The institution and creation of commissions for the trial of crimes, pretended or real, formed another branch of the royal authority constantly enforced, which laid at the mercy of the crown, the life and freedom of every subject. Numerous and striking instances of this practice, occur throughout the reigns of the last princes of the house of Valois. In many, the forms, as well as the essence of justice, were equally violated. Henry the Second, a short time before his death, in 1559, after arresting various members of the Parliament of Paris, named commissioners to form a tribunal for their trial. It was composed of several counsellors of that body itself, selected for their approved zeal, or their devotion to the orders of the court; together with the Bishop of Paris, and the Inquisitor of the faith. Du Bourg pleaded his privilege, as a counsellor of the parliament and of the church, in order to exempt himself from their jurisdiction; but his

[g] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 121 and 122. Davila, p. 399, 400.

objec-

objections were over-ruled [h]. Under Francis the Second, in 1560, by the edict of Romorentin, a court was erected in every parliament of the kingdom, to which was exclusively confined the trial of heretics. These tribunals, from their severity were denominated "Les "Chambres Ardentes*;" a title which sufficiently denotes their destination. In the case of Louis, Prince of Condé, arrested towards the close of the same year, at Orleans; the crown, without any regard to his birth and privileges, named a tribunal to try him, composed only of three lawyers, taken from among the presidents and counsellors of the parliament of Paris, acting under the Lord Chancellor, as President. The Attorney-general was plaintiff and accuser, the first notary of the court of Parliament being appointed to take minutes of the proceedings on the trial. It will scarcely excite surprize, that judges thus selected, should declare the Prince guilty of treason, and sentence him to lose his head. He vainly reclaimed the right of being tried before the parliament of Paris fully assembled, in presence of the King, the Peers of France, and all the great officers of the crown. No regard was paid to these demands, though founded on immemorial usage; and the royal pleasure supplied every deficiency in point of form. [i]

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Tribunals for the trial of heretics.

Trial of the Prince of Condé.

[h] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol i. p. 84. * The burning Courts.

[i] L'Art de Verif. les Dates, tom. i. p. 645. Davila, p. 75.

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Right of levying taxes.

Nor did the power of the French kings, during the greater part of the sixteenth century, on a superficial view, appear to be less unlimited over the property, than over the lives and liberties of the subject. Louis the Eleventh, tho' he sacrificed the nobility to his vengeance or his policy, yet did not venture to impose contributions on the people, without some form of law, and sanction of their representatives. His two immediate successors, Charles the Eighth and Louis the Twelfth, were restrained by a consideration for the constitutional rights of the nation, from attempting to levy arbitrary impositions. It was not till the accession of Francis the First, in 1515, that the French kings disdained to solicit pecuniary aid, and began to lay taxes on the country, by the sole virtue and plenitude of their prerogative [k]. Henry the Third, during the whole course of his reign, exercised the power in its fullest extent; and he varied the modes of imposing contribution, as well as the amount exacted, in every possible way that ingenuity and oppression could devise. In 1578, twenty-two new fiscal edicts or taxes, issued by him, were sent to the parliament of Paris, to be registered and published [l]. Seventeen more were added at one time, in 1586, many of which proved very onerous, and occasioned universal complaint [m]. As if these impositions were not sufficiently heavy, arbitrary exactions, without

[k] Memoires de Sully, vol. i. p. 428.
[l] L'Etoile, Journ. p. 31. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 729.
[m] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 596. L'Etoile, p. 91.

the

the name of taxes, were forced from the people. In January, 1587, Henry demanded of the kingdom at large, the sum of three hundred thousand crowns; and of the city of Paris exclusively, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand crowns[n]. Loans constituted another ordinary mode of raising supplies; and they were, as may be imagined, absolutely compulsory. In 1576, the counsellors and advocates of the parliament of Paris, were commanded to repair to the Louvre, and ordered to lend His Majesty, each, according to his ability, a certain sum. About four thousand pounds sterling were raised by this expedient[o]. Similar exactions were practised on the wealthy citizens of the metropolis.

1574—1589. Compulsory loans.

The creation of posts and offices, for which the persons who occupied or exercised them, paid considerable sums, formed one of the most intolerable abuses, issuing out of the arbitrary power of the crown. It was indeed, more injurious to the people, than beneficial to the exchequer; and was carried under Henry the Third, to an incredible height. In 1581, nine edicts of this nature were published; and in the following year, four more were issued, the profits arising from which, were avowedly destined for the two powerful favorites, Joyeuse and Epernon[p]. Villeroi expressly asserts, that fif-

Creation of offices.

Venality of places.

[n] L'Etoile, p. 98.

[o] Memoires pour servir a l'Hist. de France, p. 65. L'Etoile, p. 17.

[p] L'Etoile, p. 42. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 152.

teen

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teen hundred, or sixteen hundred officers were employed in the collection of the revenues; all of whom had purchased their places, and the aggregate of whose annual appointments, amounted to near a hundred thousand pounds sterling. Of these collectors, above one hundred and eighty were entitled treasurers of France, and enjoyed, each, a salary of five hundred crowns. He adds, as the strongest proof of the peculation and plunder committed in the management of the finances, that every piece of three Livres, or half a crown English, levied on the subject, was reduced in passing through so many hands, to less than three-pence halfpenny, before it entered the royal treasury; a diminution hardly credible [q]. It is to be observed however, that no higher, nor more incontestable authority than Villeroi, can be cited: he was secretary of state under Charles the Ninth, Henry the Third, and Henry the Fourth, by all of whom he was entrusted with the most profound secrets of government.

Royal letters of requisition.

It was customary to send letters, signed by the sovereign, or by his ministers, to corporate bodies, and even to individuals of reputed wealth, demanding either a free gift, or a loan of stipulated sums. Few persons dared to disregard, or to refuse the requisition. Even ecclesiastics, who in that age were exempted under various pretences, from contributing in a due proportion to the general wants of the

[q] Villeroi, vol. iv. p. 425 and 426.

state,

state, yet were frequently taxed by Henry. In 1578, instead of the tenth and twentieth, which he had demanded of the clergy, he thought proper to substitute mandates, subscribed with his own hand, desiring them to lend him certain sums. They were apportioned according to the supposed faculties of the parties. The chapter of Paris "in Globo," was fixed at six hundred crowns: Mariau, a rich canon, at two hundred and fifty; and others, at inferior rates. This arbitrary substitution, which excited great murmurs, does not seem however to have met with compliance in all instances.[r]

Rapacious exactions from persons in trade.

Persons trading in the articles of wine and salt, appear to have become objects of royal rapacity, in a more than common degree. In December, 1582, all the wholesale wine merchants in the city of Paris, were compelled to pay within twenty-four hours, on pain of imprisonment, arbitrary sums, from five hundred crowns, which constituted the highest rate, diminishing according to their supposed means, in a regular gradation. Similar demands were at the same time extended to the dealers in salt, throughout the whole kingdom[s]. The people were every where obliged to purchase at the King's storehouse, such a quantity of this latter article, as the commissaries, instituted for the purpose, should estimate to be requisite for their private consumption. The edict, en-

The people, compelled to purchase salt.

[r] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 99.

[s] Ibid. p. 154.

joining

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joining obedience to so cruel an act of oppression, was obtained from Henry in 1581, but it met with very general opposition thro'out the provinces [t]. About the same time, he doubled the imposition of ten sous, or five-pence, antecedently levied upon every hogshead of wine, coming in, or going out of all the cities of the kingdom, and their suburbs. It became necessary, in order to vanquish the repugnance of the parliament to publish this edict, that Henry should write a menacing letter with his own hand, commanding submission. [u]

Duties upon wine.

Customs and duties.

The authority of the crown was not less arbitrary over the customs and duties, paid upon the importation, or exportation of every commodity, to and from the ports of France. There were however treaties subsisting with foreign powers, particularly with England, by which the King was restrained from raising, or diminishing them in all cases, at his pleasure. In 1577, upon the complaint of the English embassador, the augmented duties recently imposed upon goods coming from that country, were taken off by the French government [x]. It seems that in the river Garonne, and probably thro'out the whole kingdom, these duties were two and a half per cent. on every branch of merchandize imported, or exported [y]. The right of pre-emption was exercised by the

Pre-emption.

[t] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 127.
[u] Ibid. p. 127 and 128.
[x] Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, vol. iii. p. 529.
[y] Ibid. p. 536.

crown;

crown; and we find Charles the Ninth in 1573, issuing peremptory directions to the governor of Bourdeaux, to take measures for securing all the best and finest wines made in its vicinity, for the use of Elizabeth, his ally, Queen of England [z]. Even over acts of a more private and personal nature, in which the revenue had no concern, immediate or remote, the royal interference was equally strict and universal. No person of whatever quality, could pass the limits of France, without permission. Catherine of Medicis, when regent, after the death of Charles the Ninth, in 1574, issued a prohibition to travel, unless after leave obtained [a]. Marriages the most violent and compulsory, were celebrated between persons of the highest description and rank, in consequence of a peremptory injunction of the King.

Inferior prerogatives.

Charles the Ninth, desirous to attach to himself Christopher de Bassompierre, a native of Lorrain, of an antient family, and wishing to fix him in the court of France; selected for his wife, a young lady of noble birth, named Louisa de Radeval, niece to Marshal Brissac. Her fortune amounted to the prodigious sum of fifty thousand crowns. She expressed, as did all her relations, the most unqualified reluctance to contract a marriage with a German and a foreigner, who was unacquainted with the language, as well as with the manners of France,

[z] Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, vol. iii. p. 367.
[a] Ibid. p. 417.

and

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and who was not possessed of any patrimonial inheritance, being only a younger brother. But Charles's determination overcame every impediment, and procured the immediate celebration of the nuptials [b]. It may form matter of surprize, that among the exertions of so undefined or unlimited a prerogative, we find no trace of two branches, possessed by the English princes down to Charles the First, and which form strong badges of servitude. These were purveyance, and wardships. If the former right was ever enforced, it could only have been a temporary act of violence or oppression. No court of wards existed in France, at any period of the sixteenth century.

Barriers against the power of the crown.

Notwithstanding the enormous extent of power thus vested in the French Kings, the national wisdom had erected bulwarks for its restraint, when too violently exerted. These barriers however, it must be owned, were rather intended for the protection of property, than calculated for securing their lives and freedom. In fact we find by experience, that cruelty is directed towards a few individuals; rapacity extends over a whole people. The two great barriers between the crown and the subject, were the assembly of the States General, and the Parliaments; peculiarly, that of Paris. The States, which under various denominations, were coeval with the monarchy itself, and which bore an intimate resemblance to the parliaments of

The States General.

[b] Memoires de Bassompierre, vol. i. p. 15.

England,

England, were composed of delegates from the nobility, clergy, and the third estate. The French monarchs, who did not, like the English princes of the family of Tudor, their contemporaries, stand in need of the approbation of the representatives of the nation, to confirm their ordinary acts of tyranny, or to impose subsidies; had suffered the assembly of the States General to fall into desuetude, during the greater part of the sixteenth century. Francis the First, in the course of a long reign of thirty-two years, from 1515 to 1547, marked by many reverses and great calamities, had never once convoked that body. They were tumultuously assembled for a short time, after the memorable defeat sustained at St. Quintin in 1557, by Henry the Second, his son. But, when Francis the Second ascended the throne, and the great factions began to disturb the tranquillity of the kingdom, it was deemed necessary to have recourse to the powerful engine of the States. They were held at Orleans, in 1560; interrupted by the decease of the young king, Francis; and resumed in the following year, by Charles the Ninth, his successor. Henry the Third assembled them twice; in 1576, and in 1588. In order to form an accurate idea of the degree of influence which national representatives possessed, in restraining or tempering the authority of the crown, it is requisite to follow the leading steps of their conduct.

Rarely convoked.

The ostensible motive of Henry, when he convoked the States in 1576, was to determine on

Objects proposed by Henry

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1574—1589. Henry the Third, in assembling the States.

on the measures proper to be embraced respecting the Hugonots. But, his concealed objects were, to induce them to grant him extraordinary aids of money, and to consent to the alienation of a part of the royal domain. At their meeting, he promised them in his harangue from the throne, to observe inviolably the regulations, which in concert with him they should make; and to grant no dispensation nor privilege, that could derogate from them in any manner. When however he found that the third estate was proceeding to adopt counsels calculated to diminish his prerogatives, and tending to render themselves independant in their deliberations; he changed his behaviour, and either eluded, or rejected their demands. The States, on their part, displayed a spirit of energy and freedom, which might have done honor to the representatives of any people. Far from consenting to the King's requisitions, they refused to grant the subsidies; and their language relative to the other proposition, was still more firm and inflexible. Undismayed by the apprehension of Henry's resentment, Hemar, president of Bourdeaux, speaking in the names of the three orders, declared that "the domain of the crown "was sacred and inalienable; that no case, "however extreme, could be stated, in which "they could permit of its being diminished; "that the sovereign was only the possessor "and tenant during life; and that the nation "being the proprietors, it was a fundamental "law of the state, not to alienate the smallest

Energy of the States.

They refuse to permit the alienation

"part of the domain." They not only resisted every artifice and blandishment of the court, which were exerted to shake their determination on this point; but their remonstrance operated so powerfully on the King, as to induce him to relinquish his intention, and prevented the further prosecution of his plan for selling crown lands, to the amount of fifty thousand crowns of annual revenue[c]. No speaker of an English House of Commons, would have presumed to address such a discourse to Elizabeth, nor would that Princess have manifested such deference for the representatives of the people.

CHAP. I. 1574—1589. of the royal domain.

Although Henry could not vanquish the meritorious pertinacity of the States General on these points, in 1576, he still retained, undiminished, his own prerogatives: but in 1588, when they met again at Blois, he held a very different language. Pressed by difficulties, and insulted by the Guises, who after having driven him from his capital, had disgraced him in the estimation of all France; anxious to regain the confidence of his subjects, as the only means of triumphing over the powerful faction by which he was beset; he laid the unlimited powers of the crown, at the feet of the nation. All the abuses, malversations, and oppressions, which having grown up by long prescription, seemed to be inherent in the very essence of the monarchical authority, he voluntarily and spontaneously subjected

Submission of the crown to the States, in 1588.

[c] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 450, and p. 474—477.

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to the censure of the national delegates. He offered to revoke without exception, all reversions already conferred, and never to grant any in future. He referred to their wisdom, the laws which respected trials, appeals, and the expences attending courts of judicature. He submitted to them, the state of manufactures and commerce; allowed them to examine the finances, and to make whatever regulations they might think proper for their management and amelioration; concluding by an assurance that he would so regulate his own household in future, that it should serve as a model to all his subjects for imitation. In order to render the laws which might be framed by the assembly, equally binding and permanent, he even condescended to become accountable, like the lowest individual, for any infraction of them, under the penalty of treason; and consented that they should be transmitted to the various parliaments of the kingdom, to receive the most universal sanction, as inviolable and unchangeable[d]. Louis the Sixteenth, when he opened the national assembly at Versailles in 1789, by no means manifested intentions or dispositions so favorable to a radical change in the nature of the kingly office and prerogatives.

Magnitude of Henry's concessions.

It is difficult indeed, to imagine any concessions greater than these of Henry, or on which it would have been more easy to have founded the basis of a free constitution. He pointed it

[d] De Thou, vol. x. p. 378—382.

out

out to them, himself; and such was his distressed situation, that he must have yielded to any equitable propositions which the States had dictated. But in that great body, consisting of near four hundred members, there existed neither a spirit of patriotism, nor an enlarged comprehension of the inestimable advantages attached to civil liberty. Europe then contained or presented scarcely any model of a limited monarchy. Spain, England, and Italy, might be said to obey princes possessed of very extensive and arbitrary power. Denmark, Sweden, and Poland, might perhaps all lay claim to the enjoyment of a constitution, in which the representatives of the nation ostensibly performed a part: but those states, little known to the French, were considered as too uncivilized or remote, to serve for examples in legislation. In the assembly at Blois, the individuals composing the States, were either bigotted Catholics, bent on the extermination of the Hugonots; or violent and factious men, corrupted with the gold of Spain, and devoted to the ambitious views of the Duke of Guise. That enterprizing chief, far from desiring to emancipate the people, or to diminish the royal authority; only aspired to become himself the depository of it, and to reduce the King to the shadow of a sovereign. The favorable moment for affixing legal barriers to the despotism of the crown, was lost: Guise himself soon became the victim of his criminal projects; and Henry, liberated from his apprehensions, laid aside his disposi-

Nature of the assembly at Blois.

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tion to despoil himself of his power and prerogatives. We may in fact assume, after the awful convulsions which France has witnessed since 1789, that the French people are not fitted to enjoy a constitution like our's, in which monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, melt into each other. Two Kings, Henry the Third, and Louis the Sixteenth, precisely at the distance of two centuries, the former, in consequence of his profusion and vices, the latter, from the financial embarrassments produced by war and ministerial errors; having each assembled the States General, offer the French to lay down the oppressive or arbitrary prerogatives of the crown, and to become limited monarchs. In neither case did the delegates of the nation avail themselves of the occasion. Rebellion and anarchy followed; which have been ultimately succeeded in the latter instance, by the most ferocious despotism ever witnessed among men, under the lash of a vile Italian, endued with prodigious energies of mind, implacable, vindictive, insatiable, of boundless ambition, capable of every turpitude or atrocity, and prodigal of human blood.

The parliaments.

The parliaments might be said to form a second bulwark against the tyranny and oppressions of the crown. At the close of Henry the Second's reign, in 1559, they amounted to only seven in number; and were, if strictly considered, no more than the supreme tribunals of civil and criminal judicature, throughout France. But they possessed the advantage of being permanent; whereas the States were only convoked under

under circumstances of national danger or embarrassment, for a limited and uncertain time. The parliament of Paris was besides, the organ and instrument through which the edicts emanating from the throne, received the stamp of validity. It belonged to that venerable assembly to register, verify, and publish every pecuniary edict or imposition, laid by the sovereign on the people. Though this privilege was originally intended for no other purpose, than to give greater solemnity and publicity to acts of state; yet it enabled the parliament to make frequent, and sometimes effectual opposition to such taxes, as were by them considered to be oppressive or unjust. Many striking examples of their patriotic and independent spirit, which occur under the reign of Henry the Third, sufficiently prove that virtue and freedom were not then extinct among the French. In 1578, the King having sent no less a number of edicts, instituting new contributions, than twenty-two, to be registered, the parliament refused to sanction them in the mass; and having selected some of the least exceptionable, returned the others. All the menaces of Henry could not induce them to publish those which appeared to be oppressive [c]. A stronger instance of the right assumed by that assembly, to oppose such acts of despotism, appears in 1581; when Birague, the Chancellor, insisting on the immediate verification of nine new taxes, the first

Their privileges.

Resistance to the royal will.

Example of it.

[c] L'Etoile, p. 31 and 32.

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president of the parliament stood up in his place, and replied in the collective names of his colleagues; that "according to the law of "the King, which is his absolute power, the "edicts might pass; but that, according to the "law of the kingdom, which is reason and "equity, they could not, and ought not to be "published." Henry persisting, they forebore however from further opposition[f]. It became necessary for that prince to repair in person, and to hold a bed of justice, in order to surmount the impediments which the parliament threw in the way of the taxes laid on by him in 1583, and 1586; and it required the exertion of all the powers vested in the crown, to enforce their promulgation[g]. None of his measures tended so much to render him universally odious, and to produce the defection which he experienced towards the close of his reign, as these compulsory exertions of arbitrary authority.[h]

Provincial states.

Besides the States General and the Parliaments, there existed other powerful obstacles to the unlimited exercise of the royal prerogative. Many of the provinces enjoyed the right of holding their own states, under the controul of the governor; and seem to have likewise possessed the faculty of laying on the particular taxes, requisite for raising the sums demanded by the government[i]. If we wish to be con-

[f] L'Etoile, p. 42 and 43.
[g] Ibid. p. 63 and 64, and p. 91. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 28 and 29.
[h] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 729.
[i] Montluc. Commen. vol. iv. p. 6. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 605—622.

vinced

vinced of the weight and influence of the provincial assemblies, in controuling the inordinate abuse of the royal power, we need only peruse the request, or rather the remonstrance; for such it may be justly termed; presented to Henry in 1578, by the States of Burgundy, assembled at Dijon. It contains so severe a comment on his administration, and speaks a language so nervous, bold, and independent, that we are astonished at its having been offered, or received. The delegates who carried it to the foot of the throne, demanded the reduction of the antient taxes to their former standard, and the abolition of the new contributions recently imposed: they recapitulated the many acts of prodigality committed by Henry; and desired that commissioners might be named, to ascertain the extent of his debts, to cancel such as were improperly contracted, and to liquidate those which were just, and well authenticated. They likewise proposed, that the money necessary to be levied for discharging the incumbrances of the King, should be put into the hands of commissioners, and faithfully applied to the purpose for which it was destined.

1574—1589. Their manly and generous remonstrances.

Far from resenting a speech so uncourtly, Henry condescended to endeavour to mollify the delegates, dismissed them with many promises, and actually exempted the province of Burgundy from the payment of the new taxes[k]. It may be justly questioned, whether any house

[k] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 729—731.

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of commons, during the whole reign of Elizabeth, would have dared to offer her a similar remonstrance; and we may boldly affirm, that notwithstanding the apparent limits imposed on her prerogative, by the existence of parliaments, she was in effect as arbitrary as the kings of France of the sixteenth century. In 1583, Henry made an experiment, which forcibly proved the impotence of the royal authority, when applied to the pockets of his subjects. He dispatched persons of the first rank and consideration, through the provinces, with orders to expose to the people his wants, and to demand pecuniary assistance. They met every where with peremptory refusals, accompanied by complaints and reproaches against the profusion of the King. [1]

Inability of the crown to extort money, on many occasions.

Amount of the revenues.

It is difficult to state with any degree of accuracy, the precise amount of the French revenue under Henry the Third. The domain of the crown remained still very considerable; though it is certain that before 1587, alienations had been made from it, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the States General, to the extent of sixteen millions of Livres in value[m]. We may estimate that sum as equal to seven hundred thousand pounds Sterling. The sale of the crown lands, which had remained untouched and undiminished during near five centuries, from Hugh Capet, down to the decease of Louis the Eleventh, in 1483; began under the reign of

[1] Busbeq. Letters 15 and 27. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 81.
[m] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 28.

Charles

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Charles the Eighth, when that prince in 1494 commenced his memorable invasion of Naples[n]. Previous to the expulsion of the English, which took place about the middle of the fifteenth century, under Charles the Seventh, the French kings subsisted principally on their domains. Grants of money were only made on urgent occasions, for a limited time, which was usually short; and such contributions could only be accorded or levied, by the consent of the three orders of the States, who were solemnly convoked for the purpose. Strengthened by the accession of power which he received, from the conquest of so many provinces previously occupied by the English, Charles the Seventh ventured to impose a permanent and annual taxation on his people. It was nevertheless assessed with such moderation, that no resistance was experienced from them; its whole amount not exceeding a million, eight hundred thousand Livres[o], or about eighty-five thousand pounds sterling. But under his successor, Louis the Eleventh, the taxes were raised to above four millions, seven hundred thousand Livres. Charles the Eighth, before his decease in 1498, augmented them to above five millions, eight hundred thousand Livres. Even in the following reign, under Louis the Twelfth, whose paternal affection for his subjects, inclined him to diminish their burdens; yet the impositions continued rapidly to

[n] Memoires de Sully, vol. i. p. 430, 431.
[o] Ibid. p. 427, 428.

advance

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advance. He levied in 1514, seven millions, six hundred and fifty thousand Livres [p]. If a prince of such economy and benevolence, was necessitated to increase the taxes, it may be naturally supposed that Francis the First, profuse, magnificent, and continually engaged in expensive wars, could not fail to aggravate the evil. In fact we find that before the close of his reign in 1547, he had more than doubled the amount of the sums levied by his predecessor. Francis raised them to fifteen millons, seven hundred thousand Livres [q]. Under Henry the Second, they continued to be still progressive [r]. But a very considerable allowance must be made for the continual and rapid encrease in the price of all commodities, as well as for the diminution in the value of money, in consequence of the discovery of America, between the year 1492, and 1560. It would be difficult to calculate or estimate on solid data, the prodigious influx of gold and silver into Europe, from the New World, and from the East Indies, after the commencement of the sixteenth century.

In the year 1587, Henry the Third exacted thirty millions of Livres, which were still insufficient to prevent his accumulating an enormous debt [s]. Francis the First, at the time of his decease in 1547, notwithstanding the perpetual

[p] Memoires de Sully, vol. i. p. 428.
[q] Id. ibid.
[r] Discours de la Noue, 359.
[s] About a million, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling. Hist. des Troubles de France, p. 39.

wars

wars or misfortunes of his reign, yet by a systematic economy had paid off every incumbrance, and left near five millions of Livres in his coffers. That fact proves of itself the superiority of his talents; for he never was accused of avarice or rapacity. But, at the accession of Charles the Ninth, within fourteen years afterwards, the debts of the crown fell little short of three millions, five hundred thousand Livres [t], or one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling. We may in like manner estimate by the same criterion, the administration of Henry the Second, as opposed to that of his father Francis. The public debt encreased during the course of Charles the Ninth's reign; and Ronsard the poet, in his satyre of the "Dryade violeë," pathetically laments, that the necessities of the King had compelled him to sell a great part of the forests of the province of Vendomois. Among these, was included the wood of Gastine, which Ronsard, with a poetical enthusiasm, had consecrated to the Muses [u]. The civil wars, and the total mismanagement, or neglect of the finances which followed, plunged the revenue into inextricable confusion, and added greatly to the embarrassments of the state.

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Debts of the crown.

Henry the Third, in 1579, made an attempt to enquire into the state of the domain, lands, woods, wastes, and other property of the crown, when he named commissioners to visit the pro-

[t] Traduction de l'Hospital, vol. ii. p. 19.

[u] Vie de Ronsard, p. 144.

vinces

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vinces of France. The recovery, amelioration, and augmentation of the revenue, constituted the first, as well as the most important object of the deputation; powers almost despotic and unlimited being conferred on the members [x]. How deplorable was the condition of the sovereign, and how ruined were the finances at that period, we may learn from Henry's expressions in the letters patent or commission, which he issued on the occasion. He expressly enjoins the persons deputed, to demand entrance into the assembly of the States, in such provinces as enjoyed the privilege of governing themselves by their own separate representatives. "You are then," continued the King, "to represent to them in the strongest lan-"guage possible, my necessities, arising from "the magnitude of the debts of the crown, in-"curred before my accession. They are now "so encreased, from the consequences of the "civil wars, that all the domain is sold and "engaged; and almost all the aids, taxes, and "other revenues, are alienated. The remain-"ing receipts not being equal to one-third of "the expences, indispensable for the preser-"vation of the state; I have been constrained "of late years, to my great regret, to make "many edicts and engagements very injurious, "in order to raise the necessary supplies for "the support of my household, and the offices

[x] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 608—611.

"of

"of the kingdom[y]." It seems hardly possible to depicture a more calamitous state of the revenue. If we compare it with the *deficit* in 1787, at the time when Calonne, as Superintendant of the finances, advised Louis the Sixteenth to call together the "Notables;" we shall see how infinitely the pecuniary embarrassments of Henry the Third, exceeded those of the late weak, unfortunate, and ill-fated sovereign of France.

Farmers general.

The pernicious practice of employing farmers, or partizans as they were then called, in every department of the revenue, completed the ruin of the kingdom. It is difficult to conceive the extent and magnitude of this evil, which swallowed up all the resources of France. In 1577, Henry the Third was so egregiously defrauded, that from taxes which produced twelve millions of Livres, only eight hundred thousand, or about the fifteenth part, ever entered the treasury[z]. The greater number of the farmers general were not natives, but Florentines and Savoyards, who having glutted themselves with wealth, usually returned to spend it in their own country. Catherine of Medicis, herself an Italian, had contributed exceedingly to spread the disorder, by employing foreigners, as receivers or collectors of the revenue. So lucrative was the occupation, that people of all descriptions, noblemen, ladies, and members of

Their numbers.

[y] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 621, 622.

[z] Ibid. p. 197.

the

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the council, contrived to exercise it, and to participate in the general plunder[a]. They were multiplied under Henry the Third, to such a degree, that Marshal Tavannes estimates them at thirty thousand[b]. As if to render the calamity irremediable, they were accustomed to purchase of the King, the new taxes as soon as they came out, and to advance the money which it was calculated they might produce. But, as a recompense for prompt payment, the farmers seldom laid down more than a fourth, and often not a sixth part of the sum, levied by the imposition on the people. We may see in the Memoirs of Sully, a list of the persons who were concerned and interested in the tax upon salt, in 1585. The name of the Duchess of Joyeuse, sister to Louisa of Vaudemont, wife of Henry the Third, is the first on the roll, and stands for no less a sum than seventy-five thousand crowns. It would seem by this fact, that they had not then discovered the refinement of substituting an ostensible person for the real holder of the concern, as is done in our more advanced era of finance. The aggregate amount of the money thus advanced upon the mortgage of the duty on salt, exceeds a million, six hundred thousand crowns[c]. Villeroi mentions as a fact well known, that two pecuniary edicts, obtained of Henry the Third by his favorites, were sold immediately after-

Sale of taxes.

[a] Villeroi, vol. iv. p. 412. [b] Tavannes, p. 313.
[c] Memoires de Sully, vol. i. p. 334.

wards to the financiers, one for the sum of twelve thousand, and the other for twelve thousand, five hundred crowns. The former tax produced fifty thousand; and the latter, sixty thousand crowns. [d]

Grants of taxes to the courtiers.

Such was the facility and criminal prodigality of Henry the Third, that notwithstanding the professions of economy or reform made by him to the nation, under circumstances of personal distress, at various periods of his reign; yet he did not blush to create taxes, which were exclusively meant to enrich his minions and servants. "It was common," says Villeroi, "to see ladies, gentlemen, even valets, and "persons of the vilest description, shamelessly "pursuing the verification of edicts which they "had obtained; soliciting their publication; "recommending them as productive, and call-"ing them *their* edicts [e]." Abuses could hardly be carried to a more astonishing point of indecency and enormity. The treasurers, who had the power of distributing, and apportioning the taxes or impositions, throughout the whole extent of the kingdom, committed equal violations of justice. In order to spare some villages, of which they, or their immediate relations and friends, were the proprietors, they exacted unequal and severe contributions from others, to the oppression of the inferior classes of people. Numbers of wretched peasants, unable to pay the sums thus demanded, were

Inequality of their distribution.

[d] Villeroi, vol. iv. p. 413 and 414.

[e] Ibid. p. 412.

thrown

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thrown into dungeons, and devoured by vermin, or consumed by disease. [f]

1574—1589. Wealth of the financiers.

The prodigious fortunes, acquired by all those who had in any degree, the controul or management of the public revenue under Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, excite amazement no less than incredulity.

Cossé.

Marshal Cossé, who was raised to the post of Superintendant of the Finances, by the former of those princes, contrived in the course of only one year, to discharge a hundred thousand crowns which he was indebted, and to lay by fifty thousand crowns in reserve. His wife avowed the fact to Catherine of Medicis, in the midst of the court [g].

Adjacet.

Louis Adjacet, or Giacetti, a Florentine, one of the contractors or farmers general, amassed far greater wealth. He laid out a sum adequate to sixteen thousand pounds of our money, for the castle and county of Chateau Vilain, in 1578, and married Mademoiselle d'Atri, of an illustrious Neapolitan family, maid of honor to the Queen-dowager. In addition to this landed property, he possessed rents or annuities, payable by the town-hall of Paris, to the amount of near forty thousand Livres, or about sixteen hundred pounds sterling, annually; and his furniture alone was estimated at an immense sum. We may judge of the degree of intimacy and familiarity which subsisted between him and Henry the Third,

[f] Villeroi, vol. iv. p. 408 and 409.

[g] Brantome, vol. i. p. 189 and 190.

when

when we find that he frequently entertained the King at his own house, in the most sumptuous manner: and that Prince having several times ordered Adjacet to discharge a debt, which he had incurred with a merchant, for the purchase of pearls, to the amount of two thousand crowns; the financier turned a deaf ear to the solicitation, and declined compliance with Henry's request.[h] CHAP. I. 1574—1589.

In 1589, Molan, one of the treasurers of France, having quitted Paris when the party of "the League" took possession of the capital, concealed his wealth, by burying a considerable part of it under his house. He joined the King in Touraine; but under pretence of poverty, he constantly refused to advance to that monarch, any sum however small, notwithstanding the state of distress to which the crown was reduced. In his house at Paris, after a long search, were discovered above a million of Livres in specie[i]; which sum came most opportunely, to enable the Duke of Mayenne to equip and pay his forces[k]. Irritated at Molan's refusal to assist him, when possessed of such vast resources, Henry caused him to be arrested; and the unfortunate financier was glad to compound for his freedom and pardon, by the payment of fifteen thousand crowns to the King.[l] Molan.

[h] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de France, p. 99, and p. 131 and 132.

[i] About forty thousand pounds.

[k] Memoires de Bassompierre, vol. i. p. 18. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de France, p. 274.

[l] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 176. De Thou, vol. x. p. 605.

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1594—1589. Impunity of the financiers.

The alliances which the opulent contractors formed with the greatest families in the kingdom, ensured their protection from research and punishment. Very ample powers of enquiring, suspending, and bringing to trial, all persons who appeared to have defrauded the revenue, were entrusted to the commissioners sent in 1579, to discover abuses. Collectors, controllers, receivers, and treasurers, were rendered amenable to the tribunal, which institution seemed to promise a beneficial change in the finances[m]. But in 1585, Henry compounded at once with all the treasurers of France, and gave them a complete abolition of their past malversations, exactions, and oppressions. For this act of grace and oblivion, they presented him with only a hundred and twenty thousand crowns; a sum very inadequate to the magnitude of their extortions, and which at the same time secured their future impunity. In order to levy the money, they imposed a contribution on the individuals composing their own body; and Henry's necessities induced him gladly to accept a temporary aid, at the price of the felicity and property of his subjects.[n]

Practice of funding.

The practice of funding, which in our time has been carried to so prodigious an extent in almost every European state, was not unknown

[m] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 608 and 609.

[n] Tavannes, p. 313. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de France, p. 191.

in

in France, under Henry the Third. That Prince had contracted before the year 1577, a debt of near a million and a half of pounds Sterling. Persons were found, who voluntarily advanced him sums of money, for which he gave them public security on the receipts of the revenue, or of the domain [o]. He paid them sixteen per cent. interest, and he even rejected the entreaties of the States, who exhorted him to break the contract, as being usurious. Henry appears the more meritorious in thus adhering to his engagements, as Philip the Second, King of Spain, had given him a recent example of the infraction of pecuniary faith, in his treatment of the Genoese, to whom he stood indebted [p]. Charles the Ninth borrowed money at as high an interest as twenty per cent [q]. Yet under his grandfather Francis the First, a bank had been opened at Lyons, which lent money at only eight per cent [r]. During the reign of the last mentioned monarch, annuities had been granted, payable by and at the town-hall of Paris, for which the King became security. They still subsisted under Henry the Third. Ten per cent. constituted the rate of interest paid to the holders or lenders; and the majority of the inhabitants of the metropolis possessed scarcely any other property or subsistence, independent of their labor and professions, than

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Interest of money.

Life rents.

[o] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 925.
[p] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 231.
[q] L'Art. de Ver. vol. i. p. 653. [r] Ibid. p. 640.

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the income derived from the payment of the rents of the town-hall [s]. It was therefore felt as a most serious calamity, when on the King's being compelled against his inclination, in 1585, to make war upon the Hugonots, he suspended the regular dividends or payments [t]. In order to ingratiate himself with the Parisians, the Duke of Guise, during the course of the short negotiation which took place between him and the King, before the flight of the latter from the Louvre, in May, 1588; expressly proposed, as one of the articles of accommodation, that an assignment should be made on Henry's part, to secure in future the constant and certain payments from the town-hall [u]. At the commencement of the war between the Duke of Mayenne and Henry, in April, 1589, they were totally discontinued: but such was the frenzy of the time, and so great the detestation borne to the royal name and dignity, that all private losses or distresses were swallowed up and forgotten in the enthusiasm of rebellion. [x]

Suspension of their payment.

Coin.

The coin of the kingdom, like every other institution of civil government, was fallen into a deplorable state of confusion or debasement, during the reign of the two last princes of the house of Valois. In 1577, Henry the Third issued a celebrated edict, designed to regulate the standard of the current money, and to reduce it nearly to its intrinsic weight. The esta-

[s] De Thou, vol. x. p. 598. Davila, p. 571.
[t] Ibid. vol. ix. p. 336. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 907.
[u] Davila, p. 695. [x] De Thou, vol. x. p. 598.

blished

blished custom of estimating and reckoning by Livres, an imaginary coin, was abolished on account of the inconveniences arising from the fluctuation of its value. All effects were ordered to be estimated in sales and contracts, by the Ecu, or gold crown of three Livres, which from the first day of January ensuing, was enjoined to be taken at sixty Sous, or thirty pence. They had previously risen to near double that value, and were circulated in the common mercantile intercourse, at five, and even at six livres, in some places. This edict was productive of the most beneficial consequences to commerce[y]. Previous to the accession of Henry the Second, the effigy of the sovereign was not commonly engraven either on the gold, or the silver coin: but in 1548, the year after he ascended the throne, that Prince caused it to be universally substituted, instead of the figure of a cross, which was more easily effaced by time or accidents. Soon afterwards, the specific year in which the piece of money was struck, and the particular rank which the sovereign held among those of his own name, were added on the current coin[z]. Ecus and Testons formed the common money of France; but, the Doubloons and Pistoles of Spain were universally received in payments thro'out the kingdom.[a]

1574—1589. Edicts relative to the current coin.

Before the accession of Francis the First in 1515, the French kings can scarcely be said to

State of the military force, be-

[y] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 531 and 532.
[z] L'Art de Ver. vol. iii. p. 644.
[a] Brantome, vol. iii. p. 199 and 202. vol. iv. p. 29.

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have possessed any permanent military force. The conquest of Naples, in 1494, and the battle of Fornoua, which took place under Charles the Eighth, were gained by the impetuosity and valor of the cavalry, composed principally of nobility, who overbore the feeble and unwarlike Italians. Louis the Twelfth conquered the Milaneze and beat the Venetians at Ghierra d'Adda, with troops formed upon similar principles. But when it became necessary to carry on war for several successive campaigns, in Flanders, Italy, and Germany, against the veteran and formidable Spanish bands of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, a new system was adopted by Francis the First. The infantry, which antecedently had been neglected and despised, rose into consideration; though the cavalry still continued to form the favorite service for the young nobility. Nothing could be more grotesque and savage, than the dress and appearance of the antient foot soldiers, under Charles the Eighth, in 1495, when that Prince crossed the Alps. They wore their hair long and floating on their shoulders, like the antient Gauls, in order to encrease the fierceness of their aspect; together with shirts which had large hanging sleeves, and which they continued to wear without washing, for several months. It constituted a distinctive mark of their profession, to march without stockings, or at least, with one leg bare. Even the officers and captains adhered to this badge of the infantry[a]. They commonly carried their

Infantry.

Their dress, and appearance.

[a] Brantome, vol. iv. p. 43—45.

stock,

stockings tied, or hanging at their girdles. As late as the time of Henry the Second, in 1552, when the foot soldiers were dressed and disciplined in a much superior manner, it was still customary for the officers and private men to cut their stockings at the knee, when going to the assault of a town. As their dress from the waist to the ankle, consisted only of one piece, it facilitated their scaling a wall, or mounting a breach. [b]

Arms and weapons.

Cross-bows, with which weapon the infantry were principally armed till the close of the fifteenth century, fell then gradually into disuse; and the Arquebuss was substituted in their place, when gun-powder became common: but the French soldiers were, during a long time, far from attaining any dexterity in the use of fire-arms [c]. Under Louis the Twelfth, no intermediate military rank or title, between a captain and a general, was yet invented. Colonels and quarter-masters were unknown. The celebrated Chevalier Bayard commanded a thousand foot in 1507, as a simple captain. But, eight years afterwards in 1515, at the battle of Marignan, under Francis the First, Claude, Count of Guise, father to Francis, Duke of Guise, so famous in the history of France, is said to have commanded six thousand German auxiliaries, as colonel [d]. It was not however before the year 1542, at the siege of Perpignan, that the

Military ranks.

Colonels.

[b] Brantome, vol. iv. p. 46.
[c] Ibid. p. 50.
[d] Ibid. p. 50—57.

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office of colonel began to be generally known. Brissac was then created colonel of the French infantry. [e]

Quarter-masters.

Quarter-masters were soon afterwards instituted, in imitation of the Spaniards. Montluc, who became the first of that denomination, in 1545, remained the only one in all France, before the accession of Henry the Second in 1547; after which period, others were successively named to the post [f]. Charles the Ninth, or rather Catherine of Medicis, in 1562 divided the office, and created three quarter-masters for the French infantry [g]. They seem to have remained at that number, under Henry the Third.

Colonel-general of the infantry.

The employment of colonel-general of the French infantry, originated towards the close of the reign of Francis the First; and the celebrated Gaspard de Chatillon, better known as the Admiral Coligny, was the second who ever occupied the situation [h]. Even his enemies admitted, that to his wholesome severity, and excellent regulations, was due the discipline introduced among the foot soldiery. Before his appointment, they subsisted by pillage, rapine, and every sort of violence. In order to correct the evil, he made some terrible examples; and in 1552, when Henry the Second undertook the expedition for the conquest of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, the trees on each side of the road, were covered with soldiers, suspended upon the

[e] Brantome, vol. iv. p. 58.
[f] Ibid. p. 65 and 66.
[g] Ibid. p. 85—87.
[h] Ibid. p. 220.

branches,

branches, for infraction of orders, and excesses, committed upon the peasants[i]. But, the commencement of the civil wars, about ten years afterwards, was the term of this severe discipline; and it soon became impossible for either Catholics or Protestants to restrain the enormous depredations, murders, and profanations, committed by the troops[k]. Under Henry the Third, long habit had confirmed them, and rendered the evil almost irremediable.

Contempt of discipline.

The principal cause, nevertheless, of these excesses, resulted from the want of regular pay. During the whole of the sixteenth century, but particularly between 1560 and 1590, when the dissentions of France impoverished the crown, and exhausted the treasury, the army was frequently left unpaid for several months. The Duke of Nevers seems to think, that soldiers who receive annually ten months pay, instead of twelve, have reason to be highly satisfied[l]. The officers were equally deprived of their appointments, and the wretched people became the victims of the incapacity of the sovereign to maintain the national forces[m]. Even Philip the Second, though master of Peru, and possessing the treasures of the New World, in addition to his vast revenues in Spain, Italy, and Flanders, left his troops continually in arrears;

Want of pay.

Consequences of it.

[i] Brantome, vol. iv. p. 220.

[k] Discours de la Noue, p. 572—575, and p. 643. Brantome, vol. iv. p. 133, and 137.

[l] Memoirs de Nevers, vol. i. p. 196.

[m] Montluc's Comm. vol. iv. p. 185, and 311, and 312. Memoires de Castelnau, p. 240.

and

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and saw the fairest cities of the Netherlands desolated, or pillaged by his own soldiers, driven to desperation from the detention of their pay[n]. It cannot therefore excite wonder, that the Kings of France should be unable to defray the expence of the armies which they were obliged to retain, in a time of universal insurrection. How deplorable was the condition of the royal forces employed against the Hugonots in Poitou, in December 1588, we may see in the Memoirs of Nevers. "The men at arms," says he, "are not paid; and their sufferings are "extreme, from the rigour of the season. "Provisions, and even bread, are wanting. "The greater part of the infantry are without "cloaths, shoes, or stockings; and the men at "arms say, that they are assembled for their "own destruction, not for that of the Pro-"testants[o]." To encrease the calamity, no provision or subsistence was allowed to the officers and soldiers, when age, wounds, and infirmities, had disqualified them for active service. Many, even among the former description, at the cessation of a war, when a great proportion of the troops was disbanded, either sought foreign service, or went over to the Turks, who gladly received them; or committed piracies on the seas; or lastly, embraced mechanical and mercantile professions[p]. These

[n] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 368.
[o] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 874, 875.
[p] La Noue, p. 184.

last

last mentioned, were however considered as degrading by such a conduct, the honorable profession of arms.

The cavalry constituted a far more splendid, expensive, and fashionable service than the infantry, during the sixteenth century. All the young men of the court served in it by preference, and frequently at their own expence. Their armor, dress, and accoutrements were usually superb. When Strozzi brought a troop of two hundred horsemen to Francis the First, equipped, mounted, and provided entirely at his own cost, they excited the admiration of the French monarch. Their helmets and corslets were gilt, and every man possessed two horses. Strozzi expended twenty-five thousand crowns in forming this body, which he long continued to maintain without any assistance from the crown[q]. During the reign of Henry the Second, when Savoy and Piedmont were occupied by the French, that Alpine country was regarded as the school for military education and improvement. The private soldiers became rich, by the plunder of the numerous towns and castles captured from the enemy; and they laid out the money acquired by their valor, in decorations of every kind, suitable to their profession. Fifty of them in one company wore bonnets of red velvet, ornamented with gold; chains of the same metal round their necks, and velvet scarfs. A corporal belonging to the

The cavalry.

Their dress and armor.

Riches acquired by plunder.

[q] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 295—297.

Colonel's

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Colonel's own company, appeared at mass, dressed in green sattin, and having his drawers buttoned down to his shoes, with double ducats, angels, and nobles[r]. All these marks of opulence disappeared after the beginning of the civil wars, which produced general poverty, relaxation of discipline, and dissolution of manners, not only among the soldiery, but through every rank of society.[s]

Change introduced in military weapons,

The arms, offensive and defensive, used by the troops, underwent a considerable change, between the accession of Francis the First in 1515, and the death of Henry the Third in 1589. Pikes, the antient weapon of the infantry, gave place to the Arquebuss: while in the cavalry, lances were gradually and reluctantly changed for the pistol. Tavannes, about the year 1567, contributed principally to the latter alteration[t]. Corslets were likewise in a great measure abandoned by the infantry, under Charles the Ninth[u]. After the use of firearms became general, every part of defensive armor was fabricated in a manner so massive, that it was impossible for the youngest, or most vigorous soldiers, long to sustain its weight. Under Francis the First, so light was the armor, that the oldest officers supported the fatigue of a whole day, completely armed: but before 1580, it was accounted a great exertion to re-

and in defensive armor.

[r] Brantome, vol.iv. Cap. Fran. p. 331.
[s] La Noue, p, 223.
[t] Tavannes, p. 307. La Noue, p. 275. Montluc, vol.iv. p. 293.
[u] La Noue, p. 317.

main

main two hours in a coat of mail [x]. The art of destroying, kept pace with the science of defending. Stuart, a Scottish gentleman, and by profession a Hugonot, who is celebrated for having mortally wounded the Constable Montmorenci, at the battle of St. Denis, in 1567; discovered a mode of fabricating balls of such a composition, that scarcely any armor, however exquisitely tempered, could resist their force, when discharged from a pistol. They were called "Stuardes," from the name of their inventor. [y]

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At the famous judicial combat or duel, between Jarnac and La Chataigneraye, fought in 1547, under Henry the Second, the defensive arms were first delivered to the two combatants, and afterwards the offensive weapons, with the utmost solemnity, in presence of the King, the Constable, and the whole court [z]. It excites astonishment, that under the pressure of so vast a weight, they exerted such agility and dexterity. Morions or helmets, which were universally worn at that period, fell much into disuse, before the end of Henry the Third's reign [a]. The Arquebuss formed the principal offensive weapon, which decided the fate of battles in the sixteenth century. D'Andelot first introduced them among the French infantry, about the middle of the reign of Henry the Second, on his return from Milan, where he had

offensive arms.

Arquebusses.

[x] La Noue, p. 285 and 286.
[y] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 110.
[z] Le Laboureur sur Castel. vol. ii. p. 557 and 558.
[a] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 229.

been

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been detained during several years, a prisoner; and Strozzi, who became colonel-general of the infantry in 1569, on D'Andelot's death, rendered them general. But, as the best were fabricated at Milan, a place in the dominions of the Spanish monarchy, it was long before a sufficient number could be procured to arm all the foot soldiers[b]. Brantome expressly says, that the Arquebuss would kill at the distance of four hundred paces[c]. They were gradually supplanted by the musket, which does not seem to have been known in France before 1571, or the following year. Their introduction was due to Strozzi, but he found the utmost repugnance in effecting their reception among the troops. In order to overcome this aversion, he himself, in 1573, at the siege of Rochelle, always had one carried by a page or lacquey, wherever he moved. His example soon vanquished in a considerable degree, the reluctance of his men; more especially when they saw him frequently kill even a horse, at five hundred paces distant, with a musket[d]. Henry, Duke of Guise, likewise, by constantly using the same weapon, facilitated its progress among the troops. The principal objection to them consisted in their weight, which so fatigued the soldier, that among the Spaniards, every musqueteer was allowed a follower to carry it during a march[e].

Musquets.

Guards. Their institution,

The first institution of guards, as distinct from the other forces, was due to Charles the

[b] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 290—296. [c] Ibid. p. 297.
[d] Ibid. p. 300. [e] Ibid. p. 302—304.

Ninth,

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Ninth, or rather to Catherine of Medicis his mother, who in 1563 formed one regiment, under the command of Charry, as quarter-master: they consisted of ten companies, and were by the King's express direction, taken from under the controul or orders of the colonel-general of the infantry, in order to depend wholly and exclusively on the sovereign, whose body-guard they constituted[f]. In 1573, the same prince broke them; but he issued directions to levy two companies anew, for his protection, in 1574, a short time before his decease[g]. We find from the memoirs of the Duke of Nevers, that in 1577, Henry the Third kept in regular pay, twelve hundred Swiss guards, two hundred archers, and a hundred gentlemen of his household[h]. Yet ten years afterwards, it appears that there were only about three hundred men in the regiment of guards, which usually mounted at the palace of the Louvre, together with a few archers on horseback[i]. In order more effectually to secure himself against the enterprizes of "the League," he had, before that time, created the famous band of forty-five; so denominated from the number of individuals which composed it. They were all gentlemen by birth, of approved valor, and mostly Gascons, recommended by the Duke of Epernon. Henry never moved from one place to another, without them; distributed to each, a

Band of forty-five.

[f] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 90.
[g] Ibid. p. 103, and 104. [h] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 189.
[i] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 652.

hun-

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hundred crowns of gold monthly, besides other gratifications; and entrusted the protection of his person entirely to their fidelity. During the night, they always were stationed in the antichamber of his apartment; and by their hands the Duke of Guise was finally sacrificed to the resentment of their master. [k]

The nobility served from loyalty.

During the course of the civil wars which desolated France under the two last kings of the family of Valois, the nobility served in a great measure, on both sides, either from loyalty, or zeal for their religion, or gratitude and attachment to their respective leaders. Plunder supplied the want of regular pay, among the officers and men; who, inflamed by civil and religious animosity to a pitch of mutual frenzy, were raised above considerations of a pecuniary or mercenary nature. On the side of the Hugonots, incredible instances might be adduced of this spirit. We need only commemorate the extraordinary proof of enthusiasm which took place in 1568, when a body of German auxiliaries came to the assistance of Louis, Prince of Condé. Those stipendiaries refused to join the Protestant army, notwithstanding the similarity of their faith, till they had received payment of fifty thousand crowns. The Prince was destitute of money, and the greatest Hugonot nobles in his camp, found the utmost difficulty in providing a miserable, as well as precarious subsistence. In this extremity, Condé

Example of zeal and enthusiasm.

[k] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 283, and 284.

and Coligni having chearfully sacrificed all their plate and jewels, the example was imitated by the officers and soldiers. Even the pages and lacqueys tore the ear-ings from their ears, to augment the general mass; and a common footman had the generosity to contribute ten crowns. By this means, a sum was raised, amounting to about four thousand pounds sterling, and immediately given to the Germans. No similar act of disinterestedness on the part of a whole army, is to be found in the most shining periods of Greece or Rome.[1]

Military service, purely voluntary.

One natural and necessary consequence of the voluntary service performed by the nobility in the field, was, that they quitted the army at pleasure, and could never be retained long under the standard. Neither entreaties nor commands were sufficiently powerful to compel their stay, when fatigue, or business, or attention to their domestic concerns, called them away to their castles. To cite proofs of this fact, would be to relate the history of every campaign. Even Coligni, whose ascendant over the Protestants, after the Prince of Condé's death at Jarnac, was such as to approach to despotism; yet could not cure an evil, inherent in the nature of the military profession: nor was the effect of victory itself, sufficient to induce the conquerors to pursue their triumph. After the battle of Coutras in 1587, gained by the King of Navarre, over the Duke of Joyeuse; instead

Instances of it.

[1] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 227 and 228.

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of profiting by so signal an advantage, he was instantly deserted by all the nobility of Poitou and Saintonge, who formed the principal strength of his forces. Far from marching forward, as he might be expected to have done, towards the Loire, he returned the very next day, into Gascony [m]. His retreat has been attributed to gallantry, and to the desire of laying the trophies of his victory, at the feet of his mistress, Corisande d'Andouins, Countess of Guiche; but, slave as that prince was to female charms at every period of his life, necessity, far more than love, compelled him to abandon the fruits of his success at Coutras.

Infraction of capitulations.

A melancholy effect of the rancour subsisting between the Protestants and Catholics, during the course of the civil wars, was the continual infraction and shameless violation of the articles of capitulation, agreed on previous to the surrender of cities and garrisons. It would be endless to enumerate the examples of breach of faith committed on both sides. Sometimes, the commanders themselves were either openly or tacitly consenting to the plunder and massacre of the very enemy, to whom they had, a few hours or minutes preceding, granted and solemnly promised honorable conditions. More frequently however, the brutal and vindictive fury of the soldiers, could not be restrained by any exhortations or commands. Among the great military characters of that period, Biron

Conduct of Biron.

[m] D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 58. De Thou, vol. x. p. 19.

distin-

distinguished himself by his glorious and inflexible adherence to all his engagements with enemies, and by his punishment of the slightest infraction of agreement. He gave a conspicuous proof of it, at the surrender of St. John d'Angely in Poitou, in 1569, when the Protestant troops having capitulated, were pillaged by the Catholics on quitting the town. Biron was no sooner informed of the outrage, than drawing his sword, and rushing into the midst of his own men, who were occupied in plundering; he wounded numbers of them, and compelled the others to desist immediately from so scandalous a breach of honor and faith[n]. Peter the First acted in a similar manner by his Muscovite soldiers, when he took the city of Narva from the Swedes, early in the last century.

The deliberate murders, committed after the close of battles or sieges, in the age under our review, reflect greater dishonor on the French nation, as they were commonly perpetrated on defenceless men, wounded, disarmed, and delivered over to the vengeance of some implacable, or vindictive individual. Such must be esteemed the murder of Louis, Prince of Condé, at Jarnac, after he had presented his gauntlet, and while he was actually sitting on the ground, severely wounded, between his two sureties[o]. A circumstance which rendered it more atrocious was, that Montesquiou, who

Acts of atrocity and cruelty.

Prince of Condé.

[n] Brantome, vol. iii. p. 364.
[o] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 280.

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shot the Prince thro' the head from behind, and who commanded the Swiss guards of Henry, Duke of Anjou, the commander in chief; neither received any punishment, nor underwent even a reprimand, for so detestable a crime.

Stuart.

Stuart, who at the battle of St. Denis, had killed the Constable Montmorenci in the field, being taken prisoner at Jarnac, two years afterwards; was in like manner stabbed in cold blood, by the Marquis of Villars, brother-in-law to the Constable, as an offering to his Manès. This act was performed almost in the presence of the Duke of Anjou, who expressed indeed his reluctance, but consented after some delay, to its commission. Chatelier, another gentleman, made prisoner on the same day, was butchered by the friends of Charry, whom he had assassinated in Paris, some years preceding[p]. Horrors such as these, seem to carry us back to the plain of Ilium, and to present us the same images as Achilles and the heroes of the Trojan war, offered to their respective armies.

Retaliations.

In retaliation for such cruelties, the Protestants on their part, immediately put to death two persons of rank, the Baron d'Ingrande and Prune, who had fallen into their hands by the chance of war[q]. Carreliere, a Protestant gentleman, made prisoner at the engagement of Dreux in 1562, was tied to a walnut tree, and

Instances.

[p] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 110—112. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 280.

[q] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran p. 113.

shot with pistol balls, by the Catholic soldiery[r]. After the great victory of Montcontour gained over Coligni, in 1569, many of the Hugonot prisoners were massacred from wanton barbarity or revenge. La Noue, who was one of the captives, owed his life only to the personal interposition of the Duke of Anjou[s]. Charbonnier, a private soldier, having shot the Count de Brissac, from the walls of Mucidan, during the progress of the siege; was on the surrender of the place, ordered to be immediately hanged[t]. Such, or more severe, had been the fate of Bertram Gourdon, who, in like manner had inflicted on Richard the First, King of England, in 1199, from the walls of Chaluz in the Limousin, the wound of which he died. That prince and Saladin could not have carried on war with greater inhumanity and ferocity, at the end of the twelfth century, in Syria, than did the French, near four hundred years later, in an age of knowledge and comparative refinement. Even those laws which have been esteemed sacred among nations the least polished, were trampled on in France, during the reigns of Henry the Third and his predecessor. Tavannes declares, that when he besieged Auxonne, in Burgundy, the inhabitants poisoned the wells and fountains. Not content with contaminating the water, they sent him a letter, dipped in the morbid matter of the plague, in order to spread

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Poison.

[r] D'Aub. vol. i. p. 170. [s] La Noue, p. 689.
[t] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 418—420.

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the contagion in his camp[u]. The historians of that age, contain many similar attestations and instances of the most ferocious malignity. They contrast wonderfully with the magnanimous clemency and humanity, which characterized the preceding reigns of Francis the First, and of Henry the Second. Francis, Duke of Guise's beneficent treatment of the sick and wounded soldiers of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, after that sovereign's repulse before Metz in 1553, conferred on him more glory, than his success in defending the place. During the civil wars, quarter was rarely given on either side.

Uniforms were unknown among the troops in the sixteenth century: the private men seem to have enjoyed the liberty of dressing and arming themselves, according to their capacity or fancy; but the nobility were all distinguished by their peculiar colours. The Catholics wore crimson jackets and scarfs: the Protestants were known by white ones[x]. They are frequently called "Les Casaques blanches." Henry the Third, in 1587 gave grey uniforms to the Swiss guard, in allusion to the colour which he wore himself, as a penitent of the order of the Hieronomites. The long continuance of hostilities, and the precarious intervals of repose which France enjoyed between 1562 and 1589, had rendered the nation universally acquainted with, and familiarized to the use of arms. Even the peasants, from necessity more than choice, quitted

Familiarity with the use of arms.

[u] Tavannes, p. 339.

[x] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 140 and p. 143.

the

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the peaceable arts of husbandry, and mixed in every fray. They became unfortunately victims to the rage of the soldiery, on many occasions. Such was the fate of the Gautiers, in 1589. They were peasants and labourers, who being driven to despair by the outrages of the royal forces, when added to the severity of the taxes; formed themselves into a society in Low Normandy, and were persuaded to join the party of "the "League." Their numbers amounted to above sixteen thousand. We may judge to what a pitch of ferocity they had attained, and how much the oppression which they experienced, had extinguished in them all the emotions of humanity, by a circumstance which De Thou commemorates. He says, that the Gautiers having made prisoner a royalist who was occupied in pillage, they devoured him: no vestige of his body was left; the women and children having drank the blood, while the men feasted on the carcase [y]. Even the testimony of so grave and deservedly respected a writer, can hardly induce us to credit a fact, which seems to transport us among the cannibals of New Holland. The Horde was soon attacked by the Duke of Montpensier, who put three thousand to the sword, after a fierce resistance. Four hundred were sent to labour on the public works; and the remainder, compelled to surrender at discretion, were allowed to return to their original occupation of tilling the earth. [z]

Oppression of the peasants. Gautiers.

Destruction of them.

[y] De Thou, vol. x. p. 600.

[z] Ibid. vol. x. p. 600—603. Davila, p. 796—799.

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Massacres of the peasants.

After the defeat of Mouvans, a Hugonot commander, by Brissac, in 1568, the peasants of Perigord, in which province the action happened, cut in pieces a greater number of the fugitive Protestants, than had even fallen in the engagement. Coligni executed exemplary vengeance on them, for their attachment to the Catholics. Brantome declares, that in the castle of Chapelle Faucher, not a league from his own residence at Brantome, two hundred and sixty were massacred in one room, by Coligni's express orders: they had been detained a day in confinement, and the act was deliberately executed. He adds, that on his taking the liberty to remonstrate with Coligni, because the peasants whom he had caused to be put to death, were not the same men who had slaughtered the Protestants; he replied, that it was of no consequence, since they were of the same province, and that the example would operate as a warning to their comrades. [a]

Facility of raising troops.

In a country which had been so long the scene of war, it was not difficult to raise troops: every inhabitant of a village might be regarded as a soldier; and such was the facility of levying them, that we find in 1589, Thoré, brother to Marshal Montmorenci, procuring five hundred able and warlike peasants, in the space of a few hours. They were all vassals of the family and duchy of Montmorenci, and marched instantly to garrison the city of Senlis, against

[a] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 225.

the

the attack of the army of "the League [b]". It is difficult to ascertain the total amount of the French military force under Henry the Third. In 1577, Marshal Cossé, in the council of state asserted that there were a hundred and fifty companies of men at arms in the kingdom; which, together with the archers, composed a body of twenty thousand, three hundred, and sixty-five men. "This army," said he, "is "sufficiently numerous, to engage the largest "foreign force which ever yet entered France." He nevertheless exhorts the King to form a separate body of six thousand Switzers [c]. The science of fortification, in the modern acceptation of that term, was totally unknown in the sixteenth century; and it was reserved for the age of Louis the Fourteenth, after demolishing the antient walls, to re-model the Gothic towers and battlements of cities and castles. The most perfect production of the art to be found in Europe, during the times of which we are treating, was the citadel of Antwerp, constructed by order of the Duke of Alva, at an incredible expence. Metz, accounted the second place in strength, cost above forty thousand pounds Sterling. It was estimated that near one hundred and fifty thousand crowns had been expended on the citadel of Turin.[d]

Science of fortification.

Under Henry the Third, the use and practice of artillery was not advanced beyond its

Artillery.

[b] Le Labour. sur Castel. vol. ii. p. 749.
[c] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 252.
[d] La Noue, p. 335.

infancy.

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infancy. D'Etrees, who occupied the post of master-general of the ordnance in 1558, at the siege of Calais by Francis, Duke of Guise; and who eminently contributed to its capture, was the first person among the French, who made any considerable progress in the construction of batteries. Anterior to D'Etrees, continual accidents took place from the bursting of cannon; and it was customary to cool them with vinegar, in order to prevent those misfortunes [e]. Armies were slenderly provided with artillery, which was considered as more requisite for sieges, than indispensable in the operations of the field. In 1562, when Louis, Prince of Condé, marched to invest Paris, he had with him only eight pieces of cannon, though his forces amounted to eight thousand infantry, and five thousand cavalry [f]. At the siege of Chartres in 1568 by the same general, he possessed no more than five battering cannon, and four light Culverins [g]. Even the Duke of Anjou, commanding the royal army, which in the subsequent year gave battle to the Hugonots, and defeated them at Jarnac, possessed only four cannon, and four Culverins, with sufficient ammunition to fire them, between two and three hundred rounds [h]. Elizabeth, Queen of England, sent to the Prince of Condé, as a most ample and acceptable supply of artillery,

Slender provision of that article, in armies.

Numerous examples:

[e] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 265 and 266.
[f] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 163.
[g] La Noue, p. 633.
[h] Ibid. p. 670. Tavannes, p. 27.

a short

a short time preceding, six cannon, with powder and ammunition. It was done at the earnest solicitation of Cardinal Chatillon, the Hugonot embassador: and Condé, grateful for the present, but unable to repay it in money, made a remittance to the Queen in bells taken from the churches, and in wool.[i] CHAP. 1574—1589.

When Coligni laid siege to Poitiers, a city several miles in circumference, and strongly fortified, he had in his whole camp, scarcely more than thirteen battering cannon, besides Culverins. His want of artillery proved fatal to the success of the enterprize[k]. At the memorable battle of Moncontour, the royalists were much superior to their enemies in this respect. They had seventeen pieces of cannon: Coligni, who commanded the Hugonots, only six[l]. But when that illustrious general, after traversing all the Southern provinces of France, re-appeared at Arnai le Duc in Burgundy, in the ensuing year 1570, and made an advantageous peace with Charles the Ninth, he was destitute of even a single piece of artillery, of any size or description[m]. Henry the Third, writing to his embassador in England in 1577, speaks of the train of battering cannon, which the Duke of Alenson his brother, conducted with him, at the head of the royal forces, sent against the rebels, as sufIn the army of Coligni.

[i] Memoires de Castelnau, p. 228.

[k] La Noue, p. 681. Memoires de Castelnau, p. 246.

[l] Memoires de Castelnau, p. 253. Tavannes, p. 356.—This latter author makes however the disparity less considerable: he says that the royal army had fifteen cannon, the Hugonots, eleven.

[m] Mem. de Castel. p. 265. La Noue, p. 701.

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ficient to reduce any town to obedience. It consisted of eighteen cannon, and six large Culverins[n]. We may judge of the usual proportion of artillery furnished in that age, by the terms of agreement made between Henry, Prince of Condé, and the Count Palatine of the Rhine, John Casimir, in 1575. It was stipulated, that to an army of eight thousand Germans, and six thousand Switzers, should be joined four large pieces of cannon, and twelve field-pieces, provided with suitable ammunition[o]. Two years afterwards, in 1577, when the Duke of Nevers exhorted Henry the Third to set on foot an army of six thousand infantry, two thousand four hundred Switzers, and five hundred men at arms, besides twelve hundred cavalry; he proposed to join to that military force, as a just proportion of artillery, eight cannon, and twelve Culverins[p]. Eight hundred, or a thousand pioniers, were destined to be attached to the artillery. The monthly expence, including every article, ordinary and extraordinary, requisite to maintain an army of such magnitude, he estimates at only two hundred and fifty thousand Livres a month, or about one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year. It is not without astonishment, that at the battle of Coutras in 1587, we find, the Duke of Joyeuse had only two cannon. The Hugonots were superior

[n] Le Labour. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 506.
[o] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 289.
[p] Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 189—191.

in

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in this article; for they were masters of two cannon and a Culverin, which being placed on an eminence, did signal service, and contributed greatly to the victory obtained by the King of Navarre [q]. The largest battery of cannon, directed against any place during the civil wars, seems to have been that which Marshal Matignon in 1574, opened upon the town of St. Lo in Normandy. It consisted of eighteen cannon, and five great Culverins [r]. But Brantome says, that the most furious, and well-sustained fire ever remembered by the oldest officer, was kept up from thirty-six pieces of cannon, against Ivoy in Flanders, when Francis, Duke of Guise, commanded in 1552, the forces of Henry the Second. [s]

Further proofs of the assertion.

To the period of the civil wars, is due the invention of Petards. They were first used by the Hugonots in 1580, at the siege of Cahors, capital of the province of Quercy; and they produced an effect proportionate to their novelty and violence [t]. Montelimar and Embrun, both situate in Dauphiné, were taken by Lesdiguieres in 1585, principally by means of Petards [u]. It is a singular fact that red-hot balls, which have been revived in 1782, during General Elliott's memorable defence of Gibraltar, were fired by Marshal Matignon,

Petards.

[q] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 52. Sully, vol. i. p. 59.

[r] Letter of Cath. of Medicis, in the third vol. of Le Lab. sur Cast. p. 411.

[s] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Etrang. p. 265 and 266.

[t] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 376.

[u] Ibid. vol. ix. p. 404 and 405.

as

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as early as 1580, at the siege of La Fere in Picardy. [x]

1574—1589. Ransoms.

Ransoms formed a very serious and lucrative object of attention, in that age. To the captors, they proved the means of enriching themselves and their families: the captured were frequently impoverished and exhausted, by the necessity of raising large sums, in order to procure their freedom. The prodigious prices set on the enlargement of persons of eminence, excite astonishment. At the storm of Terouenne by the troops of Charles the Fifth, in 1553, Francis de Montmorenci, eldest son of the Constable of that name, was made prisoner on the breach. Twenty-five thousand crowns were exacted for his release [y]. The liberty of Gabriel de Montmorenci, fourth son to the Constable, taken captive at the age of fourteen, in the battle of St. Quintin, was fixed at ten thousand crowns [z]; and that of the Duke of Longueville, at forty thousand [a]. Lord Grey, who commanded in the castle of Guisnes near Calais, when it fell into the hands of the French in 1558, was given to Marshal Tavannes, to recompense him for his exertions in the capture of the place. He carried his prisoner to Dijon in Burgundy, and did not release him till Lord Grey had paid five thousand crowns [b].

Their vast amount.

Bran-

[x] Pere Daniel, cited in L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 655.

[y] Le Lab. sur Cast, vol. ii. p. 350. [z] Ibid. p. 85.

[a] Ibid. p. 656.

[b] Tavannes, p. 203.—This fact cannot reasonably be doubted, since Tavannes relates it himself. It is, however, very singular, that Bran-

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Brantome complains, that his family estate had been very considerably diminished by the necessity of ransoming his brother, taken by the Spaniards in 1553, at Hesdin in Picardy [c]. When we reflect that private gentlemen served in a great measure at their own expence, or on a very precarious pay; and that in case of being made prisoners, they were reduced to purchase their freedom by the sale of their hereditary property; we must allow, that a very high sense of loyalty and honor existed among that body of men. It cannot excite surprize, that the profession of arms was considered as more honorable than any other employment. The officers of high rank who had the misfortune to be taken in war, belonged always to the commander in chief, as of right: inferior persons were retained by those individuals into whose hands they chanced to fall. Common soldiers frequently acquired wealth by these prizes. It was even customary for the general to purchase prisoners of his own men, at low sums; and afterwards to set their ransoms at very exorbitant prices. Philibert Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, when commanding the armies of Philip

Impoverishment, caused by them.

Profit, derived from ransoms.

Brantome expressly declares Lord Grey to have been given by the Duke of Guise, to Strozzi; who obtained only four thousand crowns for his release, which were paid him by the Count de la Rochefoucault. That nobleman having been made prisoner at the battle of St. Quintin, his ransom had been fixed at the above-mentioned sum. Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 298.

[c] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 157 and 158.

the

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the Second, King of Spain, did not disdain this species of traffic; and he acquired, not only glory, but profit, by his celebrated victory at St. Quintin, where so many illustrious captives fell into his possession.[d]

A striking proof, which places in a conspicuous point of view the manners of the age, relative to captives taken in war, is to be found in the writings of Ambrose Paré, first surgeon to Henry the Second, the Machaön of that period, eminent for his professional skill. Monsieur de Baugé, says he, brother to the Count de Martigues, had been made prisoner by two Spanish soldiers, in 1553, at Terouenne. Vaudeville, Governor of Gravelines, having seen him, conceived an opinion, that he was a man of rank. With a view to satisfy himself on a point of such importance, he caused Baugé's stockings to be taken off; and remarking that his socks were neat, and his feet extremely clean, he became confirmed in his original apprehension. He therefore purchased him of the two soldiers, for fifteen crowns; who being unable to maintain their prisoner, and ignorant of his quality, gladly accepted the sum offered. Baugé having studiously concealed his name and condition, patiently endured every hardship; sleeping on straw, and subsisting on bread and water. Vaudeville soon afterwards transmitted to him a list of the French killed at the capture of Hesdin by the Spaniards; and on

Instances. Baugé.

[d] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 157 and 158.

reading

reading his brother's name among them, his grief surmounted his prudence. He burst into involuntary tears and exclamations, which were heard by his guards; who no sooner discovered the connexion between him and the Count de Martigues, than they apprized Vaudeville of the value of his prize. By order of that officer, Baugé was immediately removed to an apartment hung with tapestry: he was served with delicacy, and seven thousand, five hundred crowns, were demanded for his ransom. On his pleading inability to raise so considerable a sum, Vaudeville observed, that it was possible, he might not procure his freedom at a price so reasonable; and the event justified the prediction. Mary, Queen of Hungary, Governess of the Low Countries, and the Duke of Savoy, having been informed that a person of his quality was in Vaudeville's possession, they dispatched a messenger to him, to command that Baugé should be forthwith delivered up to them; adding, that the morsel was too large for him, and that he possessed already captives sufficient. Baugé's ransom was immediately raised to twenty thousand crowns [e]. We see here a sovereign princess, sister to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and a Duke of Savoy, descending to an act of rapacious compulsion, in order to enrich themselves by the misfortune of a nobleman taken in war. It may however be admitted as some excuse for Emanuel Philibert, that he

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[e] Œuvres de Paré, p. 794.

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was at that time an expatriated prince, destitute of territory or revenues, and in fact only a soldier of fortune in the service of Spain.

Animosity of the civil wars.

Frequently, animosity or revenge, more powerful even than interest, induced the captors to put to death on the spot, an enemy who was obnoxious, though he offered great ransom. This circumstance was peculiarly characteristic of the civil wars, when mutual rancour had extinguished humanity, and even suspended the love of gold itself. At Coutras, though the Duke of Joyeuse offered fifty thousand crowns for his life, and threw down his sword, he was shot dead immediately on the spot [f]. The King of Navarre gained universal applause and popularity on that occasion, by dismissing the greater part of the Catholic gentlemen who fell into his hands, without exacting or accepting any ransom [g]. Such acts of renunciation and generosity were, indeed, by no means common. The cruelties exercised by the Spaniards, when they captured Hesdin in 1553, in order to extort ransoms, can neither be perused without commiseration, nor related without wounding decency. The enormity of their conduct was greatly augmented, by their violation of the terms of surrender, which guaranteed to the French their lives. But, no articles of capitulation could restrain the ferocity, and merciless avidity of the Spanish soldiery. Those whom they did not stab or massacre, were only re-

[f] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 56. [g] Ibid. p. 56 and 57.

served

served for more humiliating and lingering torments, of a nature too shocking to be described. Paré, who was an eye-witness to the facts, and who narrowly escaped with his life and liberty, gives a most affecting detail of every circumstance. They strongly paint the inveterate animosity and savage fury, by which the most polished European nations, when at war with each other, were actuated and inflamed, in the sixteenth century. [h]

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Nature and composition of armies, in that century.

Francis the First and Henry the Second, during their foreign wars, maintained very numerous armies, on a permanent establishment. But, under the two last kings of the house of Valois, when the revenues were alienated or squandered, and when civil dissension depressed the throne, forces were only raised and retained for a short time. The whole kingdom indeed was in arms; but the regular troops were few in number. The nobility led their retainers to the particular standard, which they chose to follow by preference. It became under Henry the Third, an object of royal and ministerial contemplation, to change the nature of military service, and to commute for a sum of money, the obligation imposed on the vassal, to attend his lord, armed in the field. The Duke of Nevers calculates, that by excusing all the individuals holding fiefs thro'out France, who were bound after publication of the "Arriere Ban," to appear in arms, on paying an equitable fine to the

[h] Œuvres de Paré, p. 791.

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crown for their exemption, above twenty thousand pounds might be easily and speedily raised[i]. Foreign auxiliaries from almost all the countries of Europe, composed a principal part of the soldiers on either side. Italians, Walloons, Spaniards, Switzers, English, and Germans, fought for one, or for the other party. Even the Scots were desirous of tasting the pay, and the plunder of France. In 1577, eighteen hundred Scots, who had served in Holland and in Denmark, anxious for employment, offered their services to Henry the Third. James the Sixth, then a minor, does not seem, either by himself, or by his ministers, to have been acquainted with, or at all consulted in the transaction. Colonel Balfour, their commander, on the part of himself and his men, made the offer to Henry. That prince declined it, not however without many acknowledgments.[k]

Army of Henry the Third, how composed.

The largest army seen in France during his reign, was in 1589, when he besieged Paris, with near forty thousand troops. Of that number, fourteen thousand were Switzers and Germans, conducted by Sancy. Near four thousand, principally Protestants, were commanded by the King of Navarre, and in his immediate employ. Epernon had brought to his master, a body of six thousand infantry, and twelve

[i] Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 193 and 194.
[k] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 512.

hundred

hundred cavalry, raised at his own expence[l]. The Dukes of Montpensier and of Longueville, Givry, and many other noblemen or gentlemen, in person led their retainers[m]. But this numerous body of forces did not belong to the crown; for no sooner was Henry dead, than the greater part immediately disbanded, or withdrew from the camp, under their respective leaders; leaving the King of Navarre to contest alone with his antagonist, the Duke of Mayenne, for the sovereignty of France. We may judge how destitute was Henry the Third of any regular army, by his summoning in the month of March preceding, the principal lords and gentlemen of his kingdom, to the number of one hundred and two, to join him at the head of their troops.[n]

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The French kings can scarcely be said to have possessed any navy, properly so denominated, before the reign of Francis the First; the gallies of Louis the Twelfth, which were stationed at Marseilles, being only calculated for the protection of the coast of Provence and Languedoc, or for expeditions of short duration. During the former part of Francis's reign, while the celebrated Andrew Doria commanded the marine, at the time that Genoa was subject to the French crown; they maintained a superiority in the Mediterranean, over the naval

Naval force.

Gallies.

[l] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 322.

[m] De Thou, vol. x. p. 577.

[n] Davila, p. 813.

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forces of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. But, after the defection of Doria, and the revolt of Genoa in 1528, Francis having lost his maritime ascendant, had recourse to an expedient which rendered him odious to all Europe. He dispatched Poulin to Constantinople, a man who had risen by his merit and capacity in the marine, as embassador to Solyman the Second, Emperor of the Turks, with orders to negotiate for the junction of the Ottoman fleet with that of France. After surmounting many obstacles, Poulin succeeded in the object of his mission. Barbarossa, in 1543, at the head of a hundred and ten gallies, coasted the whole shore of Italy, from Naples to Genoa; arrived in the harbour of Marseilles; and having sailed from thence with the French fleet and forces, they laid siege to Nice, situate in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy. Notwithstanding their superiority, they were repulsed from before the castle of the place; and Francis derived little benefit from an alliance, so generally reprobated by the Christian powers[o]. In order to recompense the zeal and ability of Poulin, he was raised in the following year, to the rank of Captain-general of the gallies; and he is commonly known in history, by the title of Baron de la Garde. In the letters patent issued on the occasion, the French navy is stated to consist of "gallies, fusts, brigantines, and round

Negotiation of Poulin, at the Porte.

Barbarossa joins the French fleet.

Creation of a captain-general of the gallies.

[o] Guichenon, Hist. de Savoye, vol. i. p. 651.

"ves-

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"vessels[p]." It is difficult to ascertain with certainty, their number or force: but we may probably rate the gallies below thirty; as only twenty-six, under command of the Count d'Enghuien, joined Barbarossa in the expedition against Nice, when every effort was exerted to swell the French marine.[q]

Nautical skill and exploits of Poulin.

The war continuing between Francis the First and Henry the Eighth, La Garde conducted the fleet, composed of gallies and round vessels, from Marseilles, through the Straits of Gibraltar, across the Bay of Biscay, into the English channel. He even ventured to attack, in the month of August, 1545, the English fleet stationed off the Isle of Wight; and having by the nautical skill of his evolutions, deprived them of the advantage resulting from a northerly wind, he extricated himself with honor, after sinking one of the largest ships of the enemy[r]. It is probable that this was the first attempt made by any European power, to navigate gallies from the Mediterranean, across a portion of the Atlantic, into the Northern seas; an attempt which proves equally the progress of navigation, and the naval ability of the French commander. Encouraged by his predecessor's success, Henry the Second, soon after his accession in 1547, dispatched Leo Strozzi, one of the most skilful mariners of the sixteenth cen-

[p] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 10.
[q] Guichenon, vol. i. p. 651.
[r] Hume's Hist. of England, vol. iv. p. 250. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 12.

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tury, with only ten gallies, to the coast of Scotland [s]; an expedition full of difficulty and danger. The French marine attained its highest point, towards the termination of that monarch's reign; when the Grand Prior, brother to Francis, Duke of Guise, commanded at one time upwards of forty gallies, well manned, and equipped for battle [t]. Under the three last princes of Valois, as the intestine troubles of the kingdom augmented, the navy sunk into neglect. Francis the Second, it is true, sent some gallies to the aid of Mary of Guise, his mother-in-law, Queen Regent of Scotland, in 1560; and three years afterwards, Charles the Ninth dispatched fifteen, to co-operate with the Spanish forces of Philip the Second, in the reduction of the Moorish fortress of Penon de Velez, on the coast of Morocco [u]. But, these exertions were only temporary; and the French marine, in common with every other national, or public institution, declined, from the exhausted state of the revenues. When it became requisite in 1572, to block up the port of Rochelle, in order to prevent supplies from being thrown into the place, while it was invested by land; the King, besides sending thither all his gallies, equipped eight "round vessels [x]." They were so denominated from their circular construction forwards, in contra-distinction to the gallies, and

State of the French marine, under Henry the Second.

Its decline under his successors.

[s] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 357 and 358.
[t] Ibid. p. 396 and 397.
[u] Ibid. Cap. Etran. p. 36 and 37.
[x] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 267.

other

other prowed vessels, which were sharp in the stem or bows.

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Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, fitted out at different times, during the course of their reigns, squadrons of armed ships, for the protection of trade; particularly in the English channel, which swarmed with pirates, or unauthorized and expatriated Banditti, who plundered and interrupted all navigation. Elizabeth appears to have afforded them constant, though indirect, and concealed protection [y]. In 1575, Henry the Third equipped from the ports of Normandy and Britanny, twelve ships, for the purpose above-mentioned; but he did it with every precaution to prevent the alarm, which he apprehended the Queen of England might take at such a measure [z]. When the Duke of Mayenne in 1577 besieged Brouage, a town on the coast of Poitou; the royal forces by sea amounted to eighteen round vessels, exclusive of the gallies and tenders, or victuallers. The ships of war were fitted out from Bourdeaux [a]. But, the most considerable naval equipment made by Henry, or rather by Catherine of Medicis, in whose name it acted; was the fleet which sailed to the islands of the Azores in 1582, for the purpose of reducing them to the obedience of Don Antonio, Prior of Crato, titular King of Portugal. It quitted the river

Equipment of squadrons for the protection of trade.

Expedition to the Azores.

[y] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 299, and p. 390.

[z] Ibid. p. 458.

[a] D'Aub. vol. ii. p. 300. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 511. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 512.

Garonne,

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Garonne, under the command of Philip Strozzi, and consisted of thirty ships, together with twenty-five Pataches [b]. No French gallies durst undertake so distant and perilous a voyage upon the Atlantic: while, as a proof of the superior nautical skill of the Spaniards in that age, the Marquis of Santa Crocé had in his fleet, no less than twelve gallies. It was certainly the first effort of the kind, and would be regarded, even in the present age, when navigation has attained to such a degree of perfection, as a bold and hazardous experiment [c]. We may question whether any English admiral of our own time, would attempt to navigate gallies across the Atlantic. The disparity between the naval force of France and Spain, is not less striking. Santa Crocé commanded twenty large ships, of which the "St. Philip" alone, might have encountered the whole fleet of Strozzi. She was a floating castle, of astonishing height, and eighteen hundred tons burthen; proportionably manned and armed in all respects. The largest vessel in Strozzi's squadron, on board of which he hoisted his flag, was only of six hundred tons; and he was obliged to quit her before he commenced the engagement with the Spaniards, as she was a very slow sailer, and unmanageable. The second ship, in which he actually ventured to attack the "St. Philip," was only of two hundred tons. It must however be admitted that the Ar-

Superior naval skill of the Spaniards.

Comparison of the fleets of the two nations.

[b] D'Aub. vol. ii. p. 466. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 581.
[c] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 581.

mada

mada of Spain in 1588, possessed a similar superiority over Elizabeth's maritime strength, and yet was defeated by the English. But, that event principally resulted from the dangers of the narrow seas, where the prodigious Galeasses of the invader, could not manœuvre with safety, while we were fighting on our own shores. Another difference, still more important if possible, between the fleets of France and Spain, in the action which took place off the Azores, was that Philip the Second's vessels were all, in the strict sense of the term, men of war, built in the royal docks at Seville; whereas it would seem that the far greater part of Henry's naval force, were merchant vessels, hired expressly for the expedition [d]. We can hardly be astonished, after considering these circumstances, that the issue of the enterprize should have proved unfortunate to the French. It is difficult to form any correct estimate of the number of sailors who navigated Strozzi's fleet; or of the amount of seamen which France could furnish in that age.

Jurisdiction of the general of the gallies.

The appointment of General of the gallies, was equally honorable and extensive in its jurisdiction, though subordinate to the higher dignity of Admiral of France: but the latter was frequently only a simple title, whereas the former was a laborious, dangerous, and efficient office. He appears to have possessed considerable power, and to have decided by his supreme

[d] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 466—468.

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authority, in a summary manner, all questions respecting prizes and captures[e]. The salary annexed to the employment by Francis the First, was ample; being no less than five hundred Livres, or above twenty pounds, a month[f]. Such was the elevation of mind which distinguished the Baron de la Garde, that when at eighty years of age, and laboring under the symptoms of a mortal and incurable disease, Catherine of Medicis offered him the sum of fifty thousand crowns to resign his post, he had the magnanimity to decline it, and to prefer dying Captain-general of the gallies. His death was correspondent to his other actions; for the physicians having announced to him his dissolution as imminent and inevitable, he caused himself to be raised, placed in a chair, with his sword drawn in his hand, and soon afterwards expired in that attitude. Neither the death of Augustus at Nola, which, however calm, had in it something of a comedian; nor the last moments of Vespasian, who seemed to feel himself an Emperor at the period of his quitting life, are equally striking with the exit of the Baron de la Garde. The obscurity of his birth and origin, rendered the heroism of his character more extraordinary. His parentage was so low, and so uncertain, as to baffle enquiry.[g]

Salary.

Heroism of Poulin.

[e] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 387.
[f] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 11—13.
[g] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 387 and 388.

To

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To La Garde was due the honor of some essential improvements and ameliorations, in the mode of building and navigating gallies. We may judge of the nature of their materials, and of their durability, from the instance of the "Reale," or admiral galley, constructed by him, which continued to keep the sea above thirty years [h]. The greatest magnificence was displayed by the captains-general, in the decorations, ornaments, and other appendages of their vessels. The examples given by contemporary writers and eye-witnesses, excite admiration. When in 1573, a negotiation of marriage was opened between Elizabeth, Queen of England, and the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the Third; it advanced so far, that orders were issued to hold the gallies in readiness for transporting the Prince to London. They were at that time before Rochelle, occupied in blocking up the harbour of the place. On receiving the intimation, La Garde made every preparation for convoying the Duke, in a manner suitable to his high rank, and to the splendor of the occasion. He is said to have expended ten thousand crowns of his own fortune, in fitting up the admiral galley. All the slaves who rowed her, were provided with jackets of crimson velvet, designed to be worn on their entry into the Thames. The state-room, or great cabbin, and the poop of the galley itself, were hung with the same materials, embroidered in

Durability of the gallies.

Their magnificence.

[h] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 384.

gold

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gold and silver, having a Greek motto or device on the awning, which signified, that "however "blown about and agitated, I have never "fallen, nor changed." The allusion was natural and obvious, to the fidelity and loyalty manifested by La Garde, during a long life, chequered by many misfortunes and disgraces. The beds, furniture, benches, streamers, and flags, were either covered with, or composed of velvet and damask in equal proportions, fringed with gold or silver. All these superb preparations were rendered useless, by the rupture of the proposed marriage, which, it is probable, Elizabeth never seriously meant to accomplish.[i]

Naval expeditions fitted out by private individuals.

Individuals appear to have possessed and exercised in the sixteenth century, the right of fitting out in time of peace, naval expeditions at their own cost, without any leave obtained from the sovereign; the object of which was either trade or conquest, as accident and circumstances might determine. The only measure requisite to be observed, was not to attack allies or confederates of the crown to which the adventurer owned allegiance. Henry the Third seems to acknowledge and admit this principle in all its extent, as equally just and generally recognized[k]. Under Charles the Ninth's reign, a son of Marshal Montluc, having heard that great wealth was to be acquired on the coast of Africa, between Cape Blanco and the Cape of

Enterprize of Montluc.

[i] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 385—387

[k] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 524.

Good

Good Hope; determined to share in these supposed riches. Regardless either of the papal donation, or of the long possession acquired by the Portugueze, he publickly equipped two vessels in the river Adour, which falls into the Bay of Biscay below Bayonne; employed six months in compleating their compliment of men, and at length sailed from Bourdeaux. Arriving at Madeira, and being refused refreshments by the governor, who had received intimation from his court, of the design of Montluc, the French landed, attacked, and carried the works; but their commander being killed, they quitted the island. Great complaints were made by the Portugueze embassador at Paris, of this infraction of treaty [l]. La Noue expressly says, that the piratical expeditions, undertaken by Frenchmen annually to the coast of Peru, did not drain the nation of a smaller number, than five hundred subjects a year. [m] CHAP. I. 1574—1589. Piracies.

Fire-ships were well known, and frequently used, under Henry the Third. Frederic Jembelli, an engineer whom the Spaniards had disgusted, threw himself into Antwerp, when besieged by the Prince of Parma in 1584; and gave signal proofs of his capacity, by sending down the Schelde, several fire-ships of prodigious magnitude. They had nearly demolished the bridge or mole, constructed by that great Fire-ships. Their invention.

[l] D'Aub. vol. i. p. 247 and 248. Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 256—258.

[m] La Noue, p. 182.

com-

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commander, across the river, and on which he reposed all his hopes of success against the place. Jembelli is regarded as their inventor [n]: it is however incontestable that they were used by the Hugonots, several years earlier, in 1577, at the siege of Brouage in Poitou. Clermont d'Amboise, who commanded the fleet of Rochelle, sent four fire-ships, to burn the royal squadron. De Thou very accurately describes their nature and destination [o]. We find no mention made of them among the English, before the invasion of the Spanish Armada in 1588, when they performed such signal execution.

[n] Busbeq. de Bong. p. 242.

[o] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 518.

CHAP. II.

State of commerce and navigation. — Bankers. — Attempts at colonization. — Manufactures. — Sumptuary laws. — Agriculture. — Condition of the peasants. — Oppression of the inferior orders of society. — Population. — State of Paris. — The Louvre. — Public Edifices. — Courts of law, and of criminal judicature. — Venality of offices. — Corruption of justice. — Confiscation. — Torture. — Punishments and executions. — Sale of honors and dignities.

State of the French commerce.

IT is by no means easy, from the most accurate and laborious comparison of the materials left us by the contemporary authors, to form any clear, or perfect idea of the precise state of the French commerce, under the last princes of the race of Valois. The information on that point, is usually short, obscure, and unsatisfactory; while on subjects of far inferior importance, they frequently embrace a vast detail. We may however safely assert, that the true principles of trade were at that period little understood or studied, either by men of speculative research, or by statesmen and financiers. A very precarious protection was extended by the state, to the merchant adventurer: navigation was dangerous, not only from the want of correct charts which might direct

Impediments to trade.

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the mariner, but, from the number of pirates, with which the Mediterranean and the other European seas were infested. Ships were besides liable to detention, and even to confiscation, either from the rapacious spirit of the government, or from the impolitic and pernicious regulations adopted in various countries, with a view to draw unreasonable advantages from the affluence of foreign traders. Monopolies, or exclusive privileges, granted by the French kings to favored individuals, fettered and oppressed the genius of commerce. Impolitic prohibitions, originating in narrow and contracted ideas of national benefit, prevented the exportation of many articles. Industry had not yet laid open and improved the numerous sources of internal riches. Naval enterprize and discovery, rather than the spirit of trade, characterized the age. Gold formed the object of general research, more than the exchange of commodities, and the progressive acquisition of wealth. The example of Spain and Portugal, whose sovereigns had over-run and conquered the richest portions of the Old and New World, with incredible rapidity; and whose subjects returned home with the spoils of India, of Africa, and of Peru; had contributed to awaken avidity, and to debauch the sober genius of laborious application. Men preferred distant and precarious expeditions, in quest of plunder, or in search of mines, before the beaten track of limited profit. The effect of so many causes, operating to one point, may account for the slender

Objects of commercial research.

slender and contracted portion of trade enjoyed by France, at this period of her history.

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The three great and principal articles of exportation, appear to have been corn, wine, and salt; though it was frequently prohibited by government, under the severest penalties, to send any grain out of the kingdom [a]. La Noue estimates the sum annually received for these three commodities, from foreign nations; to which he adds a fourth, namely "Pastel," or woad, a material much employed in manufactures; at twelve millions of livres, or about half a million sterling [b]. All the western provinces, included between the Loire and the Garonne, but particularly Poitou, were productive of corn; which the Spaniards and Portugueze gladly purchased, in exchange for the luxuries of the eastern and western hemispheres. The port of Les Sables d'Olonne, situated in the little island of Olonne, on the coast of Poitou, constituted the usual mart to which the ships of those nations resorted, under Henry the Third. A fleet of twenty-five Portugueze vessels, laden with corn, and ready to return home, was attacked and captured in the harbour above mentioned, contrary to the rights of nations, and on very insufficient pretences, by a detachment of the Hugonots from Rochelle, in 1577, notwithstanding the opposition made by Henry, Prince of Condé. They could not even plead that Portugal having fallen under the dominion of Spain, they

Objects of exportation.

[a] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 505. [b] La Noue, p. 356.

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only attacked the ships of Philip the Second, the implacable enemy of heretics; for Sebastian was then living, and had given no cause of offence to the French Protestants. It was an act of lawless and unauthorized piracy, which strongly proves the insecure state of property and commerce in that age; when the crown, scarcely able to defend itself, could afford little protection either to its own subjects, or to foreigners who visited the kingdom for purposes of trade.[c]

Wines.

Great quantities of corn were raised in some of the provinces near the Pyrenees, where the produce of estates was principally received in grain, and transported by the Garonne, down to Bourdeaux[d]. But that city was more renowned for its wines; which in the sixteenth, as well as in the nineteenth century, were held in the highest estimation thro'out Europe. It may be doubted whether before 1589, any wines of the growth of Champagne or Burgundy, were exported by sea, from France. We may form a very accurate judgment of the annual revenue which the crown derived from the commerce of the Garonne. It was estimated at more than a hundred thousand crowns in 1586, when Royan, a castle commanding the entrance of the river, was surprized by one of the adherents of the King of Navarre.[e]

Salt.

The Germans and English carried on a very considerable trade to Brouage, a town situate

[c] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 505—507.
[d] Comm. de Montluc. vol. iv. p. 165.
[e] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 573.

in

in the vicinity of Rochelle, and then possessing a commodious harbour. Salt constituted the principal or only commodity exported from thence, which was fabricated by exhalation in immense quantities, thro'out the adjacent country. These salt pans and works produced a great revenue, from the foreign, as well as domestic consumption [f]. The Hugonots derived from them one of their best pecuniary resources, as they were enabled to repay in salt, the various articles of commerce or of defence received from England [g]. How vast the resort of that nation was to Brouage, may be proved by the circumstance of Lansac, who commanded the forces of Henry in 1577, when he made himself master of the place, having seized on near sixty vessels belonging to the English, which were at anchor off the isle of Rhé. Elizabeth, justly irritated at such an infraction of the treaty between the two crowns, immediately caused an embargo to be laid on all the French ships in her ports; and it was not till after a negotiation of some length, that matters were re-adjusted. [h]

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Brouage.

Scarcely any branches of manufacture were exported by the French, in the period of which we are treating; while on the other hand, vast sums were annually sent out of the kingdom, for the purchase of various articles of luxury. The Levant trade alone drained France of above sixty thousand pounds Sterling a-year; the Turks in that age, as the Chinese in the present, gene-

Trade to the Levant.

[f] Memoires de Cast. p. 261. [g] Le Lab. sur. Cast. vol. iii. p. 515.
[h] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 529.

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rally accepting only specie, in return for the commodities which foreigners demanded from them[i]. Spices, and many other valuable productions of India, still continued to be received by way of Alexandria, notwithstanding the augmenting competition of the European nations who had discovered, or of those who began to participate in the benefits of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope. The Ottoman ministers appear even to have entertained the most enlarged conceptions of commerce, if we may judge of them from the propositions made by Amurath the Third in 1582, to Francis, Duke of Anjou, at that time nominally sovereign of the Low Countries. Embassadors were sent by the Sultan, with offers to make Antwerp the sole Emporium for all the goods imported into Europe from Greece, and from the Turkish provinces in Asia. They demanded permission for eighteen merchants of their nation to reside in the city of Antwerp, in order to conduct the sales. It was projected to land the articles of merchandize at Marseilles, which might arrive from the east; thence to transport them across Provence and Languedoc, to Bourdeaux; and finally to ship them from the river Garonne, to the Schelde. We cannot sufficiently admire a plan so extensive in its principles and operations; which, if it had been realized, might have produced a vast revolution in the commercial system of Europe, before the lapse of half a century. It would have rendered Flanders

Proposal for making Antwerp the emporium of the Turkish trade.

[i] Tavannes, p. 469.

again

again the center of industry and wealth, as she had been under the Burgundian princes, in the fifteenth century. But, the answer returned to the Sultan's proposal, was inconclusive; and the dominion of the Duke of Anjou in the Netherlands proved of too short a duration, to permit of its being resumed on either side. [k]

Trade to the Baltic.

The trade between France and the Baltic was very limited, if it can be properly said to have had any existence, before the reign of Charles the Ninth. The election of his brother the Duke of Anjou, to the Polish throne in 1573, opened a prospect of establishing an advantageous traffic with Dantzic, which city constituted a part of the dependencies of Poland. A society of merchants, to the number of near thirty, in the beginning of the year 1574, fitted out some ships from Dieppe; in hopes, by the favor and protection of the new sovereign, to enter the Vistula, and to acquire a share of the Baltic commerce: but Henry's precipitate flight from Cracow soon afterwards, probably withdrew the principal encouragement to the enterprize [l]. It may excite some degree of surprize, that notwithstanding the impediments opposed by nature to any connexion between France and Peru, from the length and dangers of a navigation round Cape Horn; and in defiance of the jealous precautions embraced by the court of Madrid, to exclude all European nations from any participation in the benefits arising

To Peru.

[k] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 646. [l] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 390.

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from their possessions in South America; yet that ships from France visited those distant countries. We find in 1576, that a Captain Nivelle, an experienced officer of the French marine, on his return from Peru, was driven to take refuge with his vessel in one of the ports of England, by the violence of a storm. He was immediately arrested by order of Elizabeth; his ship, detained; and he himself was in imminent hazard of being treated as a criminal of state. It is not easy to account for this conduct in the English ministers; unless it was done with a view to conciliate the good will of Philip the Second. That Nivelle was no unauthorized adventurer, is evident from the pressing solicitations made in his behalf, by the King of France: but, whether the object of his voyage had been plunder or commerce, it is not possible to ascertain with certainty. [m]

Trade between England and France.

Between the French and English nations, there existed a very considerable mercantile intercourse, under the two last kings of the family of Valois. It was notwithstanding, perpetually interrupted by disputes, seizures, confiscations, and acts of violence, on the part of each crown or government. Elizabeth, whatever pretensions of amity she might affect, carried on a gainful traffic, by means of her subjects, with the Hugonots; and that able princess, conscious of the embarrassments with which the French monarchs were necessitated to struggle, observed scarcely any measures, in

[m] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 497 and 498.

her

her treatment of the individuals who entered her ports. It is easy to perceive that the English were commonly the aggressors, though they always demanded, and usually obtained, satisfaction. The state of depression under which France laboured from 1560, down to a period considerably later than the death of Henry the Third, has greatly contributed to augment the lustre of Elizabeth's reign. She may be said on many occasions, to have almost dictated to the Kings of France, in matters of policy, as well as of commerce[n]. Numberless proofs of this fact are to be found in the contemporary writers.

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The principal bankers who were established in Paris before 1589, seem, as was the case in London at that time, to have been Italians or Lombards. Very arbitrary and severe enquiries into their pecuniary transactions and remittances, were made by the French government, at pleasure. Seizures of money, upon vague or insufficient pretences, often followed. Bankers were prohibited from having in their possession, any gold, or silver coin, except the current money of France or Spain, on pain of confiscation[o]. We may form some estimate of the state of commercial intercourse between Paris and London, in December, 1573, by the circumstance of there not being a single banker in the former city, who had a correspondent in

Bankers.

[n] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 316; vol. iii. p. 431 and 432, p. 515, and p. 535.

[o] Busbeq. Letter 8th.

Eng-

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England. Charles the Ninth expressly asserts this extraordinary and curious fact, in a letter addressed to his embassador at the court of Elizabeth, of that date. He adds, that there was no banker in Paris, who could furnish letters of exchange on London, for so large a sum as fifty thousand crowns; and he refers it to his minister, to discover a mode of making the remittance[p]. Yet a few months later, in June, 1574, Chiverny, the agent of Henry the Third, and who was afterwards raised to the dignity of Chancellor of France, says that he contrived, as soon as Charles the Ninth was dead, in the uncertainty of the rout which his master might take on his return from Poland to Paris, to transmit "letters of bank" to Augsburg, to Vienna, and to Venice. Twenty-five thousand crowns were contained in each of the three remittances. It displays the superior degree of facility attending mercantile transactions with Germany or Italy, as well as the regular communication subsisting between the French capital and those countries.[q]

Intercourse between London and Paris.

Remittances.

When Henry the Third, after the assassination of the Guises, in 1589, borrowed a hundred thousand crowns of Ferdinand the First, Great Duke of Tuscany, a part of the sum was sent in specie, across the Apennines and the Alps, from Florence to Augsburg, on the backs of mules. Ferdinand did not embrace this mode

[p] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 366—369.
[q] Chiverny, vol. i. p. 52.

of

of remittance, from any difficulty of procuring letters of exchange on France, but with an intention of keeping the affair concealed. Such was then the publicity of bankers accounts, that if the money had been conveyed through their medium, the fact must have become universally known throughout Tuscany.[r]

Mode of remitting money.

While Spain and Portugal, authorized by the papal grant of Alexander the Sixth, quietly divided between them the vast regions of Asia and America; France remained destitute of any colonies or establishments, beyond the Cape of Good Hope, or on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Francis the First was not insensible to the effects of so severe an exclusion. "I "wish," said he, "to see the article in Adam's "will, by which the kings of Spain and Portu- "gal are authorized, in virtue of his bequest, to "divide the new world, without allotting me "any share[s]." The superior energy of the Spanish and Portugueze nations in the fifteenth century, as compared with the French or English of that period; the geographical position of the peninsula beyond the Pyrenees, which extends along the shore of the Atlantic, thro' many degrees of latitude; lastly, the characters of Isabella, Queen of Castile, and of John the Second, King of Portugal; princes capable of discerning the genius of Columbus, and of appreciating the talents of Gama;—these were the real causes that subjected India and Ame-

Colonies

[r] De Thou, vol. x. p. 630. [s] Art. de Verif. vol. i. p. 635.

rica,

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rica, to Spain and Portugal. The Baron de Levi having discovered Canada in 1518, Francis sent out Cartier, an able navigator of St. Malo, to ascertain the nature and productions of that inhospitable country. He arrived on the banks of the river St. Laurence, in 1534, and returned to France with the expected information; but no attempt seems to have been then made to plant, subject, or colonize Canada[t]. The rich coast of South America held out greater temptations. Under Henry the Second, in 1556, Villegagnon, a French gentleman, knight of Malta, having obtained the approbation of Coligni, then admiral of France, to carry out a number of adventurers to Brazil, landed in that country, and constructed a fort. A reinforcement was sent out to him in the following year, principally composed of Calvinists, who emigrated from Geneva. Many women embarked among them, and preparations were made for establishing a powerful colony. But these flattering prospects soon ceased: dissentions, arising from religious causes, produced the most destructive consequences; and the Portugueze, joined with the natives, having attacked Villegagnon, he was reduced to the necessity of leaving his artillery, embarking his followers, and returning to Europe.[u]

Attempts at colonization, under Henry the Second.

Not discouraged by preceding misfortunes, Coligni, whose vast and expanded mind was

Efforts of Coligni, to form colonies.

[t] Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 635 and 636.
[u] Hist. Univ. D'Aub. vol. i. p. 41 and 42.

con-

continually directed towards objects of national advantage; sent out in 1562, Ribaud, in order to form an establishment at the southern extremity of North America, in Florida. The enterprize proved unsuccessful: nevertheless, in 1564, Lodonniere, a second adventurer, having effected the object of the expedition, built a fortress, and entered into connexions of friendship and commerce with the native Indians. Ribaud returning from Europe with seven ships in the following year, the two chiefs prepared to push their conquests, when a superior squadron of Spanish vessels appeared off the coast. Hostilities ensued, which proved unfavourable to the French; and Ribaud, with five hundred of his followers, having, on the solemn assurances of safety, consented to hold a parley with the enemy, they were indiscriminately massacred, and their bodies reduced to ashes. Lodonniere escaped on board the vessels, and landed safely in France[x]. History has scarcely ever commemorated a more complete or extraordinary revenge, than was taken for this atrocious breach of faith. A Frenchman, named des Gourgues, descended of a respectable family at Bourdeaux, who had been reduced to the condition of a galley slave, chained to the oar by the Spaniards, from which state of servitude he was redeemed; undertook to vindicate the wounded honor of his country, and to retaliate the cruelty of the Spanish commander. En-

Massacre of the French adventurers.

[x] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 248 and 249.

raged

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raged at the relation of the events which had taken place in Florida, he sold his property, in order to fit out three vessels; the largest of which did not exceed two hundred and fifty tons, and the smallest was only fifty. About three hundred persons of all descriptions, allured by hopes of gain or expectation of plunder, accompanied him on the expedition.

Retaliation on the Spaniards.

Arriving on the coast of Florida, he took by storm the forts which the Spanish commander, Melandez, had occupied; and after reproaching him with his perfidy and barbarity, he caused the whole garrison, amounting to near four hundred and sixty men, to be either hanged, or otherwise put to death. Melandez had affixed labels to the dead bodies of Ribaud and his countrymen, signifying that "they were so treated, not as "French, but as Lutherans." In imitation of this insult, des Gourgues attached a similar inscription to the slaughtered Spaniards, declaring that "they were not put to death as "subjects of Philip the Second, but as perfidious miscreants." Having re-embarked all the artillery taken from the forts, on board his ships, he quitted Florida, and landed at Rochelle in June, 1568, after a passage of only seventeen days. But, instead of receiving any marks of approbation from Charles the Ninth, on his arrival at court, he had occasion to employ the intercession of his friends, in order to prevent his being capitally punished. The admiration expressed by his countrymen, and by foreign nations, at so signal an act of retribution, constituted

stituted his only recompense[y]. It strongly depictures the spirit of the age, in which the genius of chivalry was not yet totally extinct; and it still more forcibly demonstrates the abject situation to which France was reduced, after the death of Henry the Second, when Spain remained during near forty years, the most formidable power in Europe. From 1568, down to the accession of Henry the Fourth, no further attempt seems to have been made, to form colonies or establishments beyond the Atlantic; a circumstance which cannot excite surprize, if we reflect on the calamitous condition of the French monarchy between those two periods.

CHAP. II. 1574—1589. Behaviour of the French court.

If, from the consideration of commerce, we turn our attention to the state of manufactures, we shall find that they were neither numerous, nor advanced to a state of any perfection, under Henry the Third. Articles of elegance and luxury, were imported from foreign nations; and even such as were of general consumption, had not attained beyond their infancy. A fabrick of silk had been introduced under Francis the First; but it met with many impediments, from the climate, from the ignorance of the artists, and above all, from the internal troubles of France. It was reserved for a happier and more tranquil reign, to awaken and to direct the industry of the French in this branch of art. Leather and parchment were prepared with

Manufactures.

[y] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 354—356.

con-

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considerable dexterity, at Troyes in Champagne; which place was likewise renowned for the goodness of its dyes, in which occupation the inhabitants found their principal employment[z]. A manufacture of white paper was established at Brignolles in Provence, about the beginning of Henry the Second's reign, and it was not the only fabrication of the kind in the kingdom[a]. The French in the sixteenth century, as in the present age, appear to have discovered little ingenuity or talents, for working in steel and iron. Fire-arms were far better fabricated in Lombardy. It was from Milan, that all the best Arquebusses, corslets, helmets and musquets, were procured. The science of gilding and inlaying armor, was likewise practised with superior skill, beyond the Alps. Gaspard, an artist of Milan, was the favourite workman who supplied Paris with every kind of arms, under Charles the Ninth, and his successor. Negroti, a Milaneze merchant, resided for the purpose, in the last mentioned capital; where he acquired a fortune of above twenty-five thousand crowns by the business, in the course of fifteen, or sixteen years[b]. We may judge how high a price was paid for armor in general, by the expence of a common morion or head-piece gilt, when fabricated at Milan. It cost in Paris, seven crowns. But encouragement having been held out to workmen in that branch, the secret of

Fire-arms.

Milan supplied France with that article.

[z] De Thou, vol. x. p. 314. [a] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 13.
[b] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 294.

gilding was discovered and successfully executed in France. Even then, the morions were purchased in Italy, and finished in Paris. Their price was however reduced to about four crowns.[c]

Musquets.

Charles the Ninth, early in his reign, endeavoured to introduce among his soldiers, musquets fabricated at Metz and Abbeville, where manufactures of arms were established; but it was found impossible to accustom the troops to handle or carry them, on account of their enormous and oppressive weight[d]. The finest musquets long continued to be brought from Milan. Gunpowder was made in France, under Henry the Third; but not in sufficient quantity to dispense with the necessity of importing that article, as well as salt-petre, from foreign states. Genoa in particular, supplied the French with gunpowder, on emergencies.[e]

Sumptuary laws.

Sumptuary laws were enacted by the vigilance of the celebrated Chancellor l'Hopital, under Charles the Ninth, with an especial view to discriminate the different orders of the people. Industry suffered little by the prohibition of articles of luxury, chiefly derived from foreign countries; and morals received benefit from the regulation. Princes, dukes, and their wives, were alone permitted the use of gold and silver stuffs, or brocades. Silk, diamonds, and pearls,

[c] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 298 and 299.

[d] Ibid. p. 302—304.

[e] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 212, and p. 278.

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were interdicted to all except gentlewomen [f]. In the beginning of 1583, these laws were renewed, and pecuniary penalties affixed to the breach of their observance [g]. Henry the Third, while sunk in luxury, himself, and indulging his minions in every refinement of an effeminate taste, affected to deprive the other sex of their natural ornaments, and to execute the new edict respecting dress, with the utmost severity. By an impolitic exercise of his power, he commanded the Provost of the palace, an officer whose jurisdiction extended indefinitely over the metropolis; to arrest, and to convey to prison, all such females as he should find violating the sumptuary regulations. In obedience to the King's orders, he seized, and dragged into confinement, not less than fifty or sixty women, among whom were several of condition. They were even forcibly detained in the prison of the Fort l'Eveque, near Paris, till the next day, though offers were made to pay the penalty incurred, and to give security for their future compliance with the edict. But, Henry had nearly been made to repent of his indiscreet interference with the police of the capital. A sedition almost took place: the Provost narrowly escaped the effects of the popular indignation; and the King, alarmed at these symptoms of insurrection, condescended to repair in person to the prison, to release the captives, and even to pay the fees incurred for their con-

Regulations respecting dress.

[f] Traduction de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 118. [g] L'Etoile, p. 72.

finement.

finement. This curious fact happened in November, 1583. [h]

Agriculture could not possibly have attained much beyond its rudest state, in a country where the harvest was rarely reaped by the same hands which had sowed the grain; where the husbandman lay at the mercy of the soldier; and where impolitic trade laws withdrew the necessary encouragement from the cultivator of the soil. The ravages of famine were frequently experienced in their utmost severity. At Paris, in May, 1586, such was the dearth of corn, that a peck of wheat sold at from three to four crowns [i]. It even attained to a higher price in the month of June of the succeeding year, when the same measure of corn rose to five crowns, or thirty Livres, in the metropolis; and to seven, or eight crowns, in the surrounding cities [k]. We may judge of the miseries which must have been experienced by the poor, at a time when it would seem that no provision was made by the laws for their maintenance. Previous to the year 1587, contributions for the support of the poor, were altogether voluntary in France. During the famine of 1586, such was the prodigious concourse of beggars who infested the streets of Paris, that it became indispensable to adopt some measures for their subsistence. Two deputies from each parish,

Agriculture.

Famine. Its severity.

Police. Beggars.

[h] Busbeq. Letter 29. L'Etoile, p. 72 and 73.

[i] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de France, p. 207.

[k] Ibid. p. 222.

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went from house to house, collecting charitable donations [l]. This remedy being however only temporary, and inadequate to the cure of the evil, it was enacted in an assembly held in Paris, on the 8th January, 1587, that the citizens should raise at once, the aggregate sum for three years, taken at the estimate of that allowance which was weekly raised and appropriated to the relief of the poor. With so considerable a fund, which was actually collected, it was proposed to clear the streets of the numerous beggars; to compel those to work who were able, and to feed the infirm [m]. Notwithstanding these beneficent and judicious measures, it became necessary, only five months afterwards, during the scarcity of corn, to send two thousand poor, to the hospital of Grenelle, without the city; where an allowance of five sous, or two-pence halfpenny, was made daily to each, by the King. Although such a distribution must have been, if we consider the relative value of money, extremely ample, yet it became requisite to withdraw it, and to place the poor in their former situation; because, unrestrained by the provision allotted for their maintenance, they could not be prevented from returning to the capital, and resuming their original profession. [n]

Poor laws.

State of the peasants.

During the thirty years which elapsed between the death of Henry the Second, and the extinction of his male posterity in the person of

[l] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de France, p. 207.
[m] Ibid. p. 217. [n] Ibid. p. 222.

Henry

Henry the Third, the condition of the French peasants may, perhaps, be justly said to have been more deplorable, than that of any other class of men in Europe. The greater part of the period was passed in civil war; while the few intervals of nominal peace, were short, precarious, sanguinary, and cruel. The "ipsa "etiam pace sævum" of the Roman historian, might be applied with equal truth to the French under the three last kings of Valois, as to the countrymen of Tacitus, during the dissensions and calamities which followed the accession of Galba. Neither the royal army, nor the forces of the Protestants being regularly paid, it became impossible for them to subsist except by plunder; nor was any lenity shewn to friends and adherents, by a famished soldiery, undisciplined, fierce, and rendered obdurate by habits of violence. Even the cessation of actual hostilities, in consequence of the treaties which were repeatedly made between the two parties, was productive of little redress. We may be satisfied of this fact, by perusing the description given to Charles the Ninth, during one of the short truces, rather than times of peace, which took place under his reign, at the close of 1573. It was drawn by the pen of a nobleman of the first rank, the Count de Tavannes; and he speaks only of the Burgundian peasants, who had suffered far less by the preceding disasters, than the inhabitants of almost all the other provinces. "They complain," says he, "to Your "Majesty, that the Gendarmerie not being paid,

Oppression of them.

Condition of the Burgundian peasantry.

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"pillage, ransom, and treat as enemies, the "people in all the villages; nor do they dare "even to utter a complaint, lest the soldier, "irritated, should complete the desolation of "their families and properties, by instantly re-"ducing their cottages to ashes[o]." If such was the treatment shewn to the Catholic peasants, by men of their own persuasion, and in a moment of peace; what must have been the enormities acted, when civil and religious enmity extinguished every emotion of humanity? Marshal Montluc did not blush to be called the "Bourreau Royal[p];" and his Memoirs, in almost every page, bear sanguinary testimony to the justice of the appellation[q]. We are struck with horror, on perusing in La Noue, and in D'Aubigné, the incredible and wanton acts of flagitious cruelty, exercised upon the inferior classes of society, who were incapable of resistance, and whose sufferings do not excite more pity, than they awaken indignation[r]. The "Gautiers," who were put to the sword in 1589 by Montpensier, were wretched Norman peasants, driven to despair by oppression, and rendered savage from the cruelty of the nobles and soldiery[s]. Religion had no concern in their insurrection, which resulted from civil and political causes.

Cruelties exercised towards the Hugonots.

The "Gautiers."

[o] Tavannes, p. 34.

[p] Montluc, vol. iv. p. 121.

[q] Montluc, vol. iv. p. 112, p. 313, p. 221 and 222, and p. 92 and 93.

[r] La Noue, p. 346. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. passim. Chron Nov. vol. i. p. 9.

[s] De Thou, vol. x. p. 600.

Nor

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Nor was it only on the husbandman or the cottager, that military ferocity exhausted its rage. All the lower orders of people, destitute of any efficacious protection, became alike victims to the despotism of their superiors. Strozzi, though in many respects an officer of high merit, and no way distinguished by a natural barbarity of disposition, yet appears to have committed an act, to parallel which, we must have recourse to the annals of Domitian, or of Caracalla, in antiquity. Unhappily, the savage and infatuated race of republicans, if that epithet can justly belong to frantic and furious Banditti, who desolated and dishonored France during the first years of the late Revolution, have outdone the most extravagant crimes of the Roman Cæsars; and have rendered credible the fabulous or exaggerated enormities of the greatest tyrants who have desolated the earth. In 1570, after the conclusion of the peace which took place between Charles the Ninth and Coligni, the army, from its undisciplined state, was accompanied by a vast number of prostitutes and dissolute women. Strozzi, who had made many ineffectual attempts to purge the camp of them, caused above eight hundred of these unfortunate creatures, at a signal given, to be precipitated from the Pont de Cé, near Angers, into the river Loire, where they all perished. We are involuntarily reminded, while perusing this tragical narration, of the "Noyades" performed by Carrier, in 1794, at Nantes, near the mouth of the same river. The story

Barbaritiy of Strozz.

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of Strozzi is indeed so extraordinary, that it would be regarded as incredible, if it was not related by Brantome, an eye witness, his intimate friend and panegyrist[t]. It is true, that he condemns it as a detestable act, and attributes it to the counsels of others; but he admits that no sort of punishment was inflicted on the perpetrator of so abominable a deed, except the frowns and averted looks of the ladies of the court, indignant at the premeditated cruelty shewn to unhappy persons of their own sex. A mutiny had however nearly taken place among the troops themselves, who were deeply affected at beholding the objects of their affection swallowed up in the waves, and crying piteously for succour. If any circumstance can augment the enormity of the fact, it is the consideration that it was a cool and deliberate proceeding, executed by the Colonel-general of the French infantry, and perpetrated almost in the presence of his sovereign, who was in the immediate vicinity, at Angers, when it was committed. The crimes of the Duke of Alva, Strozzi's contemporary, which have rendered his name proverbial for cruelty, were not reflective murders, wantonly acted; but sanguinary executions, enjoined by Philip the Second his sovereign, performed with solemnity, and in some measure palliated, tho' not justified, by the revolt of the Flemings. Far from esteeming it necessary, in order to restore discipline among the Spanish

Reflexions on that event.

Opposite conduct of the Duke of Alva.

[t] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 416—418.

bands,

bands, then the finest troops which Europe had witnessed; to cause the women who ministered to their pleasures, to be murdered, the general, of Philip permitted them in an ample degree. When he marched from Milan, across Germany and Lorrain into Flanders, in the year 1567, during which march the severest obedience was enforced with rigor, and not a peasant was despoiled of his property in the slightest instance; twelve hundred courtezans accompanied the camp. Four hundred of these females, who were of a superior description, rode on horseback: the remaining eight hundred followed on foot.[u]

Population of France.

Calculations of the population of extensive countries, are in general made upon very problematical principles, and must be subject to great uncertainty. National vanity leads so obviously to exaggerate, that we ought to lend an academic faith to all assertions, unless supported by incontrovertible facts. It is difficult to form any decided opinion upon the number of people which France contained, at the period of which we are treating, and no contemporary writer has ventured to name their aggregate amount: but we are justified in supposing, that in an age when civil war had made such deep ravages, the kingdom could not, in proportion to its magnitude, have contained as many inhabitants, as it did in 1789, before the late unfortunate Revolution. Yet La Noue speaks of the multitudes who swarmed in every province;

[u] Strada de Bell. Belg. vol. ii. p. 90. Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Etran. p. 81.

and

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and he compares the population of France to that of the country of Flanders, before the insurrections, produced by the tyranny of Philip the Second, had diminished the numbers of the Flemings [x]. His testimony is respectable, not only from the known integrity of the author, but from its being written under the reign of Henry the Third, at a period of the greatest national depression. We are assured that in 1581, the whole kingdom contained ninety-six bishopricks, and one hundred and thirty-two thousand parishes and hamlets [y]. Four years earlier, in 1577, the Duke of Nevers calculated, that in the dominions of France, there were three millions of hearths. If we estimate each of them at six persons to a family, it will give a population of only eighteen millions. But it must be remembered, that neither French Flanders, Artois, Alsace, Lorrain, the County of Burgundy, denominated Franche Comté, Rousillon, Cerdagne, nor Beärn, were then included in the monarchy. It was supposed that by a poll-tax, levied equally on all the inhabitants, a sum of twenty millions of Livres might be raised annually [z], or about eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds Sterling. On the number of inhabitants in Paris, we may form a more accurate judgment. It was found that in 1588, there were in the capital, at least twenty thou-

Population of Paris.

[x] La Noue, p. 356.

[y] Cabinet des trois Perles, p. 5, cited in the Satyre Menippee, vol. ii. p. 70.

[z] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 197.

sand

sand men in the service of "the League," capable of bearing arms; many strangers having been recently introduced into the city, by the adherents of the house of Guise, in order to augment their strength. The whole population exceeded two hundred thousand. [a]

Paris. Its state.

The French metropolis, at the close of Henry the Third's reign, was divided into sixteen wards or quarters, and was principally built on the northern bank of the Seine, and in the island of "Notre Dame." It had not yet made any considerable progress to the south of the river, where the "Fauxbourg St. Germain" is now situated. Strong walls, flanked with large towers, surrounded the city; and the keys of the gates were always deposited in the hands of the municipal magistrates, who took especial care that they should be carefully shut every evening. The citizens were regularly enrolled, disciplined, and accustomed to the use, as well as exercise of arms: they elected their own military officers, had their places of assembling, their respective banners, and their watch-words. If not formidable from their skill, they were at least respectable from their numbers [b]. In general, the streets were so narrow, that it became easy to leap from the tops of the houses on one side, to those on the other; and it formed a common pastime during the Carnival, for the young nobility to divert themselves by this hazardous

Municipal government.

Mode of building.

[a] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 6. Mem. de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 163.

[b] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 3.

amuse-

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amusement [c]. That the principal streets were paved or pitched, is undoubted; since we find that at the preparations made for celebrating the unfortunate tournament, during which Henry the Second was killed by Montgomery, in June, 1559, the street "Saint Antoine" was unpaved, converted into lists, and adorned with theatres and triumphal arches [d]. Other proofs of this fact might be adduced; but, the dirt and filth that continually accumulated, became notwithstanding such, as to render all passage exceedingly difficult, and to contribute in an eminent degree, to the pestilential or malignant distempers, by which the capital was frequently desolated. In 1583, Montjosieu, a man of talents, peculiarly skilled in mechanics, undertook the execution of a plan which he had formed, for cleansing the streets: but the expence so much exceeded the estimate made by him, that in endeavoring to accomplish it, he considerably impaired his own private fortune [e]. At all the corners, were fixed heavy chains, commonly fastened and sealed, but which, on the shortest warning, could be stretched across from side to side; and by the addition of barrels filled with earth, they formed a Barricado insurmountable to infantry or cavalry. Henry the Third experienced the formidable nature of these barriers, at the insurrection of the

Regulations of police.

[c] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 326.
[d] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 84 and 85.
[e] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 78.

Parisians,

Parisians, in May, 1588[f]. The private houses of the citizens were constructed with salley ports, which rendered them more tenable and defensible against an armed force[g]. On the other hand, the Bastile might be regarded at once, as the citadel of Paris, and as a prison of state. It was so strong from its construction, that the treachery alone of Tetu, who commanded in it, produced its surrender to the Duke of Guise, immediately after the King's flight from the metropolis[h]. Ornano had offered to maintain it against all the forces of "the League." A similar fate befel the Bastile under Louis the Sixteenth, from the weakness, irresolution, and want of all foresight in the government.

The Bastile.

The Louvre itself was rather a fortress than a palace, and did not become the ordinary residence of the French monarchs, before the reign of Charles the Ninth. Francis the First, and Henry the Second, had indeed occasionally inhabited it; and the latter of those princes made considerable embellishments or augmentations to the structure, during which time he resided at the Hotel de Maigrez, a house confiscated to the crown, and presented by him afterwards to the Constable Montmorenci[i]. The palace of the "Tournelles," situated not far from the Bastile, formed the residence of

The Louvre.

The Tournelles.

[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 258. Davila, p. 690 and 691. Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 3.

[g] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 3.

[h] De Thou, vol. x. p. 269. [i] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 510.

Henry

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Henry the Second, at the time of his unfortunate and premature death: but Catherine of Medicis, impressed with horror at the recollection and sight of a place, which had become the scene of so tragical an accident, demolished it to the foundations, and even caused the gardens contiguous, to be destroyed. We cannot wonder at her aversion to a palace, in the great hall of which, decorated at that time for balls and festivals, the dead body of her husband lay in state within a few days afterwards, during six weeks, surrounded with torches, altars, black cloth, and all the apparatus of funeral pomp[k]. The aspect of the Louvre, like that of almost all the palaces of kings throughout Europe, till the close of the sixteenth century, inspired terror, and partook in many respects more of the nature of a prison, than of a royal residence. It was composed of towers, constructed in a Gothic taste, surrounded with a wide and deep ditch, across which the entrance lay through vast gates, constantly guarded by bowmen. In 1574, Catherine of Medicis, as soon as Charles the Ninth had expired, caused all the doors and entrances to the Louvre, except one, to be closed up; and even of the remaining entrance, the gate was shut, and only the wicket left open, on each side of which were stationed the Switzers, who never quitted it by day or night[l]. These precautions were taken by the Queen-mother, in order to prevent the escape of her son the Duke of Alenson, and

Aspect of the Louvre.

[k] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 85. [l] L'Etoile, p. 4.

of her son-in-law the King of Navarre, who remained during a long time, captives in the palace. Margaret of Valois, in the year 1578, exerting an effort of courage and attachment, contrived to let down her brother, the Duke of Alenson, by means of a rope, into the moat of the Louvre, whence he reached the abbey of St. Genevieve: but she describes the attempt to have been of the most perilous nature.[m] CHAP. II. 1574—1589.

There were few monuments of architecture to be found in Paris, at the decease of Henry the Third. Catherine of Medicis, who, with the vices of the family from which she sprung, inherited likewise their love of the arts, taste, and refinement, began to construct the palace of the Tuilleries in 1564, and she completed it before her death in 1589. It formed a magnificent edifice, raised on the models of antient Greece, purified from the barbarism of the middle ages. Europe had hitherto witnessed no structure which could be placed in competition with it, beyond the Alps[n]. Not content with so splendid a proof of her passion for the elegant arts, she erected another palace in the parish of St. Eustace, on which she expended immense sums, and at which she usually resided[o]. The second Hotel in Paris, in point of magnificence, in 1587, was that of the Duke of Epernon, estimated at only five thousand crowns less value than the former mansion[p]. We may form some The Tuilleries. Palaces.

[m] Mem. de Marguerite de Valois, p. 164, 165.
[n] L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 648. [o] De Thou, vol. x. p. 502.
[p] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 167.

idea

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idea of the price given for houses of the highest description, in 1575, by the sum which Henry the Third paid for the one presented by him to Chiverny, and in which he resided when Chancellor of France. It cost twenty-six thousand Livres, or about eleven hundred pounds Sterling.[q]

Bridges. Pont neuf.

Before the death of Charles the Ninth, there was not any bridge in Paris, which crossed the river Seine in its whole extent: those previously existing, only conducted from the northern bank, into the island of "Notre Dame," lying in the middle of the stream. In the month of May, 1578, the foundations of the "Pont neuf" were laid by the King in person. It was composed of hewn stone, Du Cerceau being the architect; and a tax was imposed on the people, expressly for its construction[r]. The troubles which soon arose in the kingdom, interrupted its continuance; and it was not completed till their termination, under the succeeding reign. Quelus, the celebrated minion of Henry the Third, killed in a duel with Entragues, was interred with a pomp little short of royal, on the same day when the "Pont neuf" was begun; and the King, who was inconsolable for his loss, wished to have immortalized the memory of his favorite, by calling it the "Pont aux Pleurs;" the Bridge of Tears.[s]

[q] Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 62.

[r] L'Etoile, p. 29 and 30. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 727. Chron. Septennaire, p. 447.

[s] Vie de Margue. de Valois, p. 258.

Although

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Paris began to be regarded as the royal residence.

Although Paris had, for successive ages, been regarded as the capital of the kingdom, it was not till after the year 1577, that it began to constitute the ordinary and general residence of the sovereign. Louis the Eleventh, and his two immediate successors, held their court more frequently on the charming banks of the Loire, at Plessiz-les-Tours, Amboise, or Blois. Under Francis the First, Chambord, as well as Fontainbleau, the former of which palaces he built, and the latter he re-constructed, formed the favorite places of his abode, tho' he breathed his last at the castle of Rambouillet[t]. Henry the Second displayed the same preference; while Charles the Ninth commonly divided his time between Monceaux, St. Germain, and Vincennes. At the last-mentioned castle, only about two leagues from the metropolis, he expired. But Henry the Third, though he twice convoked the assembly of the States General at Blois, yet from preference resided during the greater part of his reign, at Paris. The city derived no small accession of opulence and splendor from that circumstance; and the King severely reproached the inhabitants for their ingratitude and revolt, after the numerous marks of predilection which he had uniformly exhibited towards them[u]. Were it permitted to the historian to indulge in speculation, it might be an object of curiosity to reflect on the destiny which awaited Paris, if Henry had not perished

[t] Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. ii. p. 10—13. Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 277—279.

[u] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 66.

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Rigorous intentions of Henry the Third, towards Paris.

by the knife of Clement; and to conjecture what changes might have taken place in the metropolis of the French monarchy. Davila expressly says, that on the evening preceding his assassination, the King publickly declared, that "within a few days, neither houses nor walls "should exist, and that only the vestiges of "Paris should be discernible." It is highly probable that the threat would have been executed in its utmost rigor, as the victorious troops, composed of different nations, would have vied with each other, in accomplishing the vengeance of their common master. The age was prone to acts of blood; and it must be admitted, that no sovereign ever received from rebellious subjects, greater cause for indignation. Henry's death extricated the Parisians from the awful, and imminent destruction[x]. So perfectly was the King's determination of permanently transferring his future court and residence to some other place, known thro'out France; that in 1588, after Henry's flight to Chartres, the inhabitants of Tours and of Lyons sent deputations, beseeching him to give the preference to their respective cities[y]. It may be conjectured, that he would probably have fixed his abode, as well as have transferred the courts of law, and other appendages of the metropolis, to the banks of the Loire. It was thus that Constantine, in antiquity, removed the seat of empire from the Tyber, to the shore of the

Reflexions on it.

[x] Davila, p. 815. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 284.
[y] Chron. Nov. vol i. p. 65.

Bos-

Bosphorus. Philip the Second had given him a recent example of the kind, by abandoning Toledo, the antient capital of Castile, and chusing Madrid for the new seat of the Spanish monarchs. Peter the First exhibited a third similar instance, when he quitted Moscow, early in the last century.

There is no circumstance which more strongly characterizes the period before us, than the universal corruption of justice. Francis the First had introduced the purchase and sale of employments, among the members of the various parliaments of France, which assemblies constituted the supreme tribunals of civil and criminal judicature. His successors, peculiarly Henry the Third, augmented in a vast proportion, the number of magistrates in every court; and as all the charges were venal, the persons who bought offices, seem to have had no other object in view, than to reimburse themselves for the expence incurred, by the most iniquitous perversions of equity. The sovereign himself, unrestrained either by the majesty and sanctity of the throne, or by a regard to the felicity of his people, did not blush to interfere in decisions of law, sometimes by solicitation, and not unfrequently, even by open violence. Examples of both, continually occur. In 1578, at the entreaty of his minions, Henry condescended to prosecute by personal importunity, the suit of Madame de Senneterre, a lady of the court, against La Chatre, a gentleman attached to his brother the Duke of Anjou; and of consequence, a person

Corruption, and venality of justice.

Interference of the crown in legal decisions.

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obnoxious to the King's favorites. So powerful a suitor did not exert his interest in vain, and La Chatre lost his cause [z]. The royal guards, in May, 1582, having broken open a prison by the King's order, rescued a follower of La Valette, detained in confinement for a capital crime [a]. Some years afterwards, de Rusmenil, a gentleman of Picardy, accused of murder, having been conducted prisoner to the "Conciergerie," was taken from thence by force, at Henry's command, who was induced to commit so unbecoming an act, by the importunate request of the Duke of Joyeuse [b]. During the course of his whole reign, he seems to have considered the creation of legal employments, as only a mode of imposing taxes. The multiplication of these offices, which exceeded belief, produced the most deplorable consequences. Even the highest dignities of the law became venal. In 1580, for the first time, Bellievre, on the resignation of his office of President of the great chamber of the Parliament of Paris, received from his successor the attorney-general, the sum of sixty thousand Livres, or about two thousand, five hundred pounds, as a compensation. Above sixteen hundred pounds were given as the price of the vacant post of Attorney-general, by Faye, a master of requests; who sold his own place to a third person, for near eleven hundred [c]. The people became the victims of these iniqui-

Creation of offices.

Sale of employments.

[z] Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 260.
[a] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 140.
[b] Ibid. p. 202. [c] Ibid. p. 120.

tous

tous proceedings. So avowed was the traffic of charges in the courts of judicature, that the prices were public and notorious: they appear to have risen in value; no doubt, from the encreasing profits annexed to their exercise. In August, 1584, the place of Counsellor in the parliament of Paris, sold for three thousand, five hundred crowns; those of the criminal court of justice, called the "Chatelet," for two thousand; while a mastership of requests and accounts, brought from four, to five thousand crowns.[d]

Ineffectual efforts of l'Hopital, to reform these abuses.

It was in vain that the celebrated Chancellor l'Hopital, under the reign of Charles the Ninth, one of the greatest and most virtuous statesman whom France ever produced, endeavoured by his exhortations, as well as by his personal example, to check the torrent of venality. In an age and a court so corrupt, his single resistance could not effect a change in the national manners. All his writings prove the regret, no less than the indignation, which he felt at the depravity of his countrymen. Placed as he was on the highest eminence of the law, and holding in his hand the great seal; neither the dignity of his office, nor the incorruptibility which it demanded, could protect the sanctuary of justice from invasion and pollution. "I am torn," says he, in one of his epistles, "by the wolves and tigers who surround the "King, who carry off the patrimony of the "state, break down the most sacred barriers, "and despise every consideration, except their

[d] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 181.

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Solicitations of the nobility.

" own interest [e]." The first nobility were not ashamed to tamper with the inferior ministers of the law, to solicit their favor, to buy their suffrages, and even personally to waste whole days in so disgraceful an occupation. " The nobles," says L'Hopital, " forget the dignity " of their rank so far, as to place themselves before break of day, at the door of " a vile secretary: they accompany him to the " court of law; remain near him; expose " themselves to the insults of the crowd assembled below the bar; and attend him in " the evening to his own house [f]." Nor did the men alone descend to these base and scandalous arts, in order to pervert the course of justice: ladies of the highest quality emulated them in rapacity, importunity, and solicitation. " The most obstinate contests," exclaims the same virtuous magistrate, in another place, " which I am obliged to maintain, are not " against the men: the women resist much " more strongly, and do not so easily abandon " the struggle." [g]

Rapacity of the women of the court.

If it could be necessary to confirm a testimony so unquestionable, the Memoirs of Tavannes, contain ample proof of the enormities committed in all the provincial tribunals, as well as in those of the capital [h]. " The doc- " tors in law," says he, " have prolonged the " period of study requisite for entering on the " discharge of judicial functions, to ten years,

[e] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 235.
[f] Ibid. vol. i. p. 138.
[g] Ibid. vol. i. Eclaircissements, p. 17.
[h] Tavannes, p. 34.

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"in order to exclude the nobility from participating in their enormous depredations." — "The number of officers employed in the administration of justice and finance, do not fall short of fifty thousand." — "All the judges having purchased their seats, make no scruple of receiving bribes circuitously, which clerks, solicitors, and others present to their wives and servants[i]." Montluc pathetically laments that the nobility, by disdaining to occupy judicial and municipal offices, as they had done at the beginning of the sixteenth century, had thrown away one very essential source of political consideration and power[k]. It was not till the year 1560, in the assembly of the States-General held at Orleans, that a complete and total separation was made between the long and the short robe; or in modern language, between the sword and the gown. Previous to that æra, Bailiffs and Senechals, though not versed in jurisprudence, or bred to the profession of law as a science, yet decided on questions of life and property.[l]

Separation of the military, and judicial character.

Duration of suits of law.

The duration of suits formed one of the most pernicious consequences of the general corruption of justice; and the litigious spirit which distinguished the times, rendered the evil more severe in its operation. All ranks of men were infected with it; and the chicane practised to protract decisions, rendered the legal proceedings interminable. Families buried their whole

[i] Tavannes, p. 287. [k] Memoires de Mont. vol. iv. p. 10.
[l] L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 648.

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estates in ruinous contests with each other, while they passed their lives in soliciting, purchasing, and corrupting the judges. L'Hopital draws a striking and affecting picture of the extent of this calamity[m]. Henry the Third, in the eloquent and pathetic harangue, with which he opened the States-General in 1588, insists at great length, upon the magnitude, as well as enormity of the evils, proceeding from the delays and procrastinations of courts of law; and recommends it as an object of the most serious attention to the national representatives, to provide a remedy[n]. But they were too deeply engaged in faction, to attempt the reformation of justice.

Forgeries.

Among the extraordinary crimes and abuses practised in the age under our review, with an intent to corrupt, or to pervert the course of justice, must be reckoned the fabrication of the great seal itself. A secretary of the court of chancery, named Mornat, aided by another accomplice, undertook to affix a counterfeit seal to the warrants issued from that high tribunal. He executed it with so much dexterity and success, that in a very short space of time, he acquired between five and six thousand crowns. When Mornat was discovered, he escaped the punishment due to his crime, by a precipitate flight into Germany; but his confederate, less vigilant, was seized and executed. This event took place under Charles

[m] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 137—145; and vol. ii. p. 56—62.

[n] De Thou, vol. x. p. 378 and 379, and p. 387.

the

the Ninth, during the period when L'Hopital was Chancellor. [o]

1574—1589. Confiscations.

Confiscations formed another of the modes by which wealth was obtained, more safely, but hardly more honorably, under the last princes of Valois. Henry the Second presented to his mistress, Diana de Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois, all the effects seized or sequestered from the Hugonots, for the crime of heresy. It amounted to a prodigious sum; and the donation, as may well be supposed, did not tend to retard, or to diminish the rigor of the proceedings against the Protestants [p]. Henry had previously given her, at his accession in 1547, the money arising from the confirmation of offices thro'out France, the grants of which were always renewed at the commencement of every reign [q]. Under his son Charles the Ninth, a new species of confiscation was introduced by Gondi, Marshal de Retz, a Florentine; which invention long continued to be practised. Not only persons convicted of treason, or other crimes of state, but men of every description, became liable at death, to have their houses, property, and effects, seized on by order of the crown, and ravished from their legal heirs, upon the slightest pretences. The old, rich, and infirm, constituted objects of unremitting attention to the rapacious courtiers, who often obtained a grant

Seizure of private effects.

[o] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 83—85.
[p] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 83.
[q] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 9 and 10.

of

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of their property, and kept a watchful eye upon their future prey. L'Hopital, at an early period of his life, introduces the Cardinal of Lorrain his patron, in one of his epistles, thus addressing him: "Observe the houses of the dying, "and on the first accident write to me, or come "to me in person: be assured in that case of "the royal favor, and of mine; but take care "that no one more alert, anticipate you: don't "lose sight of the beds of the sick[r]." When Mazille, first physician to Henry the Third, lay expiring in 1578, the minions did not even wait till he was dead, to divide his spoils. Camus, a master of requests, was dispatched to take an inventory of his effects, which was done in the presence of the favorites, among whom they were immediately distributed. It does not appear that Mazille had committed any sort of crime, except the imputation of being suspected to lean towards the reformed religion. His only real delinquency consisted in his reputed wealth, which was estimated at ten thousand crowns.[s]

Examples of this practice.

Torture.

The torture was indiscriminately administered in the sixteenth century, to prisoners of every rank, in its utmost violence, and at the arbitrary pleasure of the magistrate. It was not even considered as an act of indecency, for sovereigns to be present at such a scene. Henry the Third, in 1582 assisted behind a curtain, during the deposition of Salcede, who was put

[r] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 87.
[s] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 101.

to

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to the torture [t]. Not only kings, but queens, and the ladies of the court, were accustomed to regard executions as a spectacle of state, which excited little emotion, or rather were contemplated with satisfaction and complacency. The genius of the age, sanguinary and ferocious, diminished, if it did not extinguish the horror, naturally produced by the apparatus of punishment and death. The public and magnificent entry of Henry the Second into Paris in 1549, was solemnized by exhibitions of this nature. Several Hugonots expiated the crime of heresy; and Henry assisted as a spectator of their sufferings. Florent Venot, one of them, had been previously confined for six weeks, in an engine formed like a sugar-loaf, pointed at its base [u]. After the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560, Francis the Second, his brothers, who were still in a state of childhood, together with all the princesses and ladies of distinction, were present as at a pageant, when Castelnau and his accomplices were put to death. A platform was constructed under the windows of the castle itself, in order to facilitate the view of the ceremony [x]. Philip the Second in Spain, and John the Third in Portugal, attended the "Acts "of Faith" as they were denominated, surrounded by their courtiers of both sexes, who beheld unmoved, the spectacle of heretics reduced to ashes. We do not however find that

Executions.

The court assisted at them.

[t] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 636. [u] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 75.
[x] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 94.

Mary,

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Mary, Queen of England, bigotted and persecuting as she was, ever exhibited herself in Smithfield on these occasions; tho' Bonner and Gardiner, Bishops of London and of Winchester, were frequently present at the stake, and at the administration of torture. That the sentiments of compassion and terror, connected by nature with the sight of a barbarous execution, could not be entirely subverted by custom or fashion, is evident, from the example of Leonora d'Humieres. She was the wife of William de Montmorenci, one of the younger sons of the Constable of that name; and having gone in March, 1563, together with the other ladies of the court, to witness the execution of Meré Poltrot, who was torn in pieces by horses, on the "Place de Greve," at Paris, for the assassination of the Duke of Guise, she was so overcome with her emotions, as to faint away, and expire soon afterwards. [y]

It is however equally clear, that the fate of this lady, the result of sensibility acting powerfully on the nerves, did not produce any alteration in the mode of frequenting punishments. When Salcede in 1582, suffered by the same species of death which had been inflicted upon the assassin of Francis, Duke of Guise; an apartment at the town-house was fitted up, and ornamented expressly for the royal family [z]. Henry the Third, his queen, and Catherine of

Death of Salcede.

[y] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 220.

[z] L'Etoile, p. 55.

Medicis,

Medicis, were present at the performance[a]. The King not only regarded, but directed the manner of it; and at the intercession of the Duchess of Mercœur, who was allied to Salcede, he abbreviated that criminal's torments, by causing him to be strangled[b]. His head was sent to Antwerp; as that of Coligni, in 1572, if we may believe D'Aubigné, had been carried to Rome[c]. The embassador of Philip the Second having very warmly remonstrated with Henry, on his sending Salcede's head to be exposed in a city, where he had not the smallest right to command as sovereign; the King, somewhat embarrassed, replied, "I "have forwarded it to my brother, to use "his pleasure respecting it; and to make pies "with it, if he pleases[d]. History has not disdained to commemorate, that the invention and use of gags is due to the age of which we are treating; and it forms a characteristic circumstance. They were first known in 1560, and used in Dauphiné, to prevent the Hugonot ministers from exhorting, or converting the people.[e]

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Gags.

It was not only in the magistracy, and all the courts of civil or criminal justice, that venality was introduced and established. Corruption had pervaded every department, and pol-

Universal venality.

[a] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 636.
[b] L'Etoile, p. 54 and 55. Busbeq. Letter 8th.
[c] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 17.
[d] Busbeq. p. 64. Letter 9th.
[e] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 99.

luted

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luted every charge or employment. De Thou justly attributes to the nefarious practice of purchasing offices, which necessarily excluded merit, talents, and services, the universal depravity of manners that took place under Henry the Third, and the final ruin of that prince's affairs. It had attained to a pitch of enormity, beyond which it seemed impossible to advance[f]. The highest offices of trust and dignity were publickly exposed to sale, without concealment or disguise; and the sovereign frequently purchased them of his own subjects and courtiers.

Examples. Joyeuse.

When Joyeuse was appointed governor of Normandy in 1583, he could not take possession of the province, till he had bargained for the cession of the principal cities and fortresses, with those individuals to whom they had been entrusted by the sovereign. Exhausted by the sums requisite to advance for this purpose, and unable to satisfy D'O, commander of the castle of Caen; Joyeuse was necessitated, besides paying down a considerable part of the purchase in money, to place him in the post of Superintendant of the finances, from which function he had been antecedently removed, for the most criminal malversation and incapacity. Henry not only consented to a transaction so pernicious to his people[g]; but in the following year, he even condescended to importune the

Mayenne.

Duke of Mayenne, to lay down the office of Admiral of France, which employment he like-

[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 676.

[g] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 80.

wise

wise conferred upon Joyeuse. Tho' forty thousand crowns were given to Mayenne, as the purchase or compensation, he expressed the utmost reluctance to accept it, and only complied in the last extremity. His brother the Duke of Guise, more inflexible, withstood all the solicitations of the King, and peremptorily refused to quit or to sell on any conditions, the charge which he occupied, of lord-steward of the household. [h] CHAP. II. 1574—1589. Guise.

The inferior officers in every department, imitated the example of the great nobility. Henry, King of Navarre, having demanded in 1589, at the time of his treaty with the crown, a place of security upon the Loire, for the passage of his troops, it became requisite to cede to him either Saumur, or the Pont de Cé, situate lower down on the same river, near Angers. But Cosseins, who commanded in the Fortress of the Pont de Cé, refused to evacuate it for a smaller sum than a pension of fifty thousand crowns. Fortunately, De Lessart, Governor of Saumur, was not so unreasonable in his demands; and in order to render him more accommodating, the King of Navarre did not hesitate to offer, nor De Lessart blush to accept, a bribe of three thousand crowns [i]. Even the prisoners whom Henry had arrested at Blois, after the assassination of the Guises, the care of whom he had entrusted to Le Guast, a captain in his guards, Governor of Amboise; he was Governments. Prisoners.

[h] Davila, p. 500. [i] De Thou, vol. x. p. 591.

reduced

CHAP. II. 1574—1589.

reduced to purchase again of his own officer, within a few weeks. Such was the faithless and venal temper of the age. Fifteen thousand crowns were paid to Le Guast, from the royal treasury, for the persons of the Cardinal of Bourbon, the young prince of Joinville, son to the late Duke of Guise, and the Duke of Elbeuf. He was likewise permitted to retain, and to appropriate to himself, the ransoms to be derived from the liberty of the Archbishop of Lyons, and several other captives, who still remained in his possession[k]. "I have seen," says Tavannes, "eight or ten governments proposed to be "sold, in order to form a party against the so- "vereign himself: the buyers felt no scruple in "defrauding the soldiers of their pay, and in "laying exactions upon the merchants and peo- "ple, in order to reimburse themselves the in- "terest of their money[l]." Such was the total dissolution of all authority on one hand, or of obedience on the other, that subjects presumed even to impose regular pecuniary contributions in the provinces, by virtue of their sole mandate. Bussy d'Amboise, when commanding in the castle of Angers in 1579, which constituted part of the establishment of his master, the Duke of Anjou; was accustomed to exact very heavy taxes from the citizens, and from the inhabitants of the Duchy; frequently without consulting or obtaining permission either from the Duke, or from the King[m]. It would be

Pernicious effects of those practices.

Abuses and oppressions.

[k] De Thou, vol. x. p. 509 and 510. [l] Tavannes, p. 266.
[m] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 90.

easy

easy to cite similar instances of oppression committed under a reign, when the facility, prodigality, and apathy of the sovereign, encouraged every abuse; when impunity accompanied the greatest crimes; and when the despotism of the crown formed the smallest evil, to which the unhappy people were exposed.

CHAP. II. 1574—1589.

CHAP. III.

State of the Gallican church. — Immunities of the clergy. — Revenues. — Taxes, levied on the ecclesiastical property. — Alienations. — Abuses. — Pluralities. — Sale of preferments. — Depravity of the great ecclesiastics. Institution of the penitents. — Processions. — Seditious sermons. — Asylums. — State of the Hugonots. — Internal form of their civil government. — Numbers and resources. — Military, and naval force. — Commerce. — Intolerance of the age. — Mutual acts of violence and cruelty, between Catholics and Protestants. — Perversion of the human mind, on matters of religion: — Examples of toleration. — State of the King of Navarre. — His territories, power, and resources. — Court of Navarre.

CHAP. III.

State of the church.

THE Catholic church, in whatever point of view we consider it, whether with regard to its spiritual authority, its immunities, or its revenues, formed an object of the first magnitude and consideration, during the sixteenth century. Notwithstanding the vast defalcation from the possessions of the see of Rome, occasioned by the revolt of Luther; the Papal power continued still to be extremely ample and formidable, in all the countries which persisted to acknowledge its supremacy. The French hierarchy might be said in some measure to constitute a monarchy within the state itself; governed by its own laws; amenable to its own jurisdiction; contributing supplies from its pro-

proper and distinct resources; and professing obedience to a distant, as well as a superior sovereign. Although, from the resistance made by the Parliaments, to the decrees of the Council of Trent, which declared the independence of the clergy on the civil magistrate, and the inability of the crown to tax the ecclesiastical property, they had never been published, nor recognized in France; yet the validity of those regulations was not the less rigorously asserted by the Romish pontiffs. The age itself was by no means liberated from, or superior to, the influence of a superstitious veneration for the sacerdotal office and character; nor had the thunders of the Vatican ceased to unnerve the arm of princes, and to suspend or arrest their boldest determinations. It is difficult or impossible, to mark the precise limits of a power, which, in an especial degree was founded on opinion, and maintained by religious terror: but we may pronounce, that however on its decline, it continued still to operate, and to affect the deliberations of the wisest and most vigorous cabinets. When Sixtus the Fifth, in the insolence of the apostolic authority, published an excommunication against Henry the Third in 1589; that prince, however dissolute he might be, yet felt so deeply wounded by it, that he could neither be induced to eat or drink, for more than forty hours. Universal sadness, mingled with dejection, appeared in the army, even while advancing rapidly and prosperously towards Paris. Their operations were slackened;

Ecclesiastical power.

Papal authority, and consideration.

CHAP. III. 1574—1589.

and all the efforts of the Archbishop of Bourges, proved ineffectual to diminish the King's uneasiness. He complained to those about him, that the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who had impiously sacked Rome, and detained in prison the sacred person of the Pope himself, had not been so severely treated by Clement the Seventh. "But, Sire," replied the King of Navarre, "that "monarch was victorious: if we conquer, the "censures will be revoked; if we are worsted "by the enemy, we shall all die excommuni-"cated[a]." Even in the article of death itself, Boulogne, Henry's chaplain, would not give him absolution, till he had solemnly professed his resolution to obey the papal mandate, by releasing the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Archbishop of Lyons, though their liberation from prison should cost him his life and crown[b]. Scarcely greater deference could have been manifested for the pontifical character and orders, by Frederic Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, or by John, King of England, during the darkest period of the middle ages.

Immunities of the clergy.

The immunities and privileges of the clergy, were not only in themselves ample, but a degree of sanctity surrounded, and protected them from invasion. Superstition, more powerful than any written law, withheld the sword of justice, and arrested the dagger of the assassin. Prelates and Cardinals were regarded as beings separated from the mass of mankind, and as hardly amenable to any secular tribunal. When Henry em-

[a] Davila, p. 811. [b] Davila, p. 818. De Thou, vol. x. p. 673.

braced

braced the determination of sacrificing the Duke of Guise, instruments of his vengeance were readily found: but it was much more difficult to procure men, who would imbrue their hands in the blood of a member of the sacred college. Recourse was therefore had to inferior ministers for the purpose. Four common soldiers, each of whom received fifty crowns, dispatched the Cardinal with their halberds, on the refusal of the band of forty-five, composed of gentlemen, to perpetrate a deed esteemed so impious[c]. It was not for the murder of the Duke, but for that of the Cardinal, that the indignation of the Holy See was manifested; and while Sixtus treated the death of the former, as an act of state, excused, if not justified by the circumstance which produced it, he affected to consider the assassination of one Cardinal, and the detention of another, as a crime equally enormous and irremissible.[d]

Their supposed sanctity.

Nor were the great ecclesiastics protected only in their lives and freedom, by the privileges of the order to which they belonged. They pretended to be exempt from appearing, or from answering before any court, except that of Rome, even in cases of treason. The Archbishop of Lyons, when arrested as an accomplice of the Guises, in December, 1588, refused to answer interrogatories, and pleaded his superiority to any temporal, or spiritual jurisdiction

Exemption from ordinary jurisdiction.

[c] Davila, p. 751. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 259. De Thou, vol. x. p. 478.

[d] Davila, p. 770.

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in France. Henry assembled the privy council; and they determined, on the strength of many weighty precedents, that as the crime laid to his charge, exceeded the powers annexed to the ecclesiastical judges, he might be brought before the civil magistrate. The Archbishop persisted nevertheless in his silence, and declined acknowledging the right either of the parliament, the peers, or the sovereign, to bring him to trial[e]. We may judge of the dangerous and unlimited nature of the clerical pretensions in that age, by the famous decree of the Sorbonne. A college, composed of only sixty Doctors in theology, being consulted by the heads of "the League," in January, 1589, had the audacity to declare the oath of allegiance void, and to authorize the assumption of arms against their legitimate prince. So bold and unanimous a decision had no inconsiderable effect in exciting, and in confirming the rebellion which took place throughout the kingdom.[f]

College of the Sorbonne. Its weight.

Powers and pretensions so vast, as well as so undefined, were sustained by adequate revenues. It is difficult, if not impossible, to form any accurate estimate of the value of the lands possessed by the church, throughout France; but, we know that they included a large proportion of all the property of the country, together with extensive feudal authority over their vassals. A Protestant writer of the time of Henry the Third, asserts, that the temporalities of the

Revenues of the clergy.

[e] De Thou, vol. x. p. 480 and 481.

[f] Ibid. p. 511 and 512. Satyre Menip. vol. iii. p. 361, 362.

clergy,

clergy, regular and secular, produced twenty millions of Livres, or near nine hundred thousand pounds, annual income. He adds, that France contained six hundred and fifty Abbies of the orders of St. Bernard and St. Benedict; besides above two thousand, five hundred Priories[g]. In some instances, the episcopal jurisdiction seemed to have arrogated, and nearly extinguished the functions most inseparable from royalty. The bishops of Mende in the remote and mountainous province of the Gevaudan, enjoyed by antient prescription or agreement, the right of parity with the sovereign. Justice was administered in their joint names, and the bishop struck money, as an independent prince[h]. Something analogous to this pretension of the bishops of Mende, may be found among ourselves, in the constitution of the County Palatine of Durham, where the bishop exercises functions approaching to those of a feudal Baron, lord paramount within his own diocese. It is nevertheless unquestionable, that the French kings claimed and exercised the right of levying taxes from the clergy of their dominions; and it is equally certain, that the latter body virtually acknowledged by their submission, the validity of the royal prerogative. Four tenths, or "Decimes," constituted their ordinary annual donation to the state, under the three last kings of the house of Valois[i]. The precise sum to which they amount-

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Civil power.

Taxes levied on ecclesiastics.

[g] La Noue, p. 357. [h] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 601.
[i] Lettres de Paul de Foix, lettre 49, p. 539.

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ed, it is difficult to specify: but we may conclude that they did not fall short of nine hundred thousand Livres a year, or about forty thousand pounds; because we find that between 1560 and 1575, including a period of fifteen years, the government had drawn from the order of ecclesiastics, an aggregate contribution of full fifteen millions of Livres.[k]

Extraordinary aids.

Besides these regular impositions, extraordinary aids were frequently demanded, and obtained by the crown. Two, three, and even four "Decimes" were, on particular occasions, exacted from the clergy, above the customary contribution, without any application being made to the see of Rome for its approbation; and without any attempt on the part of the Gallican church, to refuse obedience, or to withhold payment[l]. The Romish pontiffs, unable to prevent, did not however the less resist and deny the right of the crown, to draw any pecuniary aid whatever from the clergy, even under the most pressing national calamities, unless authorized expressly by the papal grant and permission. That this pretension, however arrogant and absurd we may now esteem it, was by no means altogether visionary or destitute of existence, is a fact not to be denied; since in 1582, Henry the Third having demanded and obtained one "Decime" only, beyond the ordinary number; made, thro' the medium of his

Resistance of the popes, to the taxation of the clergy.

[k] Near six hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling. De Thou, vol. vii. p. 296.

[l] Lettres de Foix, p. 539.

embas-

embassador at the court of Rome, the strongest exertions to obtain the dispensation of Gregory the Thirteenth, for thus invading the ecclesiastical property. He urged, that such assistance had become indispensable to him, he being on the point of renewing his alliance with the Helvetic confederacy; adding, that he could not conclude a treaty, without paying the arrears of the pensions due to the Switzers, and making the accustomed presents to the Cantons. These reasons, however plausible or solid in themselves, produced no impression on the pontiff; who pertinaciously refused to give any sanction to a proceeding, derogatory to the papal power, and to the independence of the French clergy on the crown. He even founded his refusal, on the indirect approval, which his consent to levy a fifth "Decime" might be construed to convey, of the right existing in the kings of France, to exact the four annually received. Henry however, feeble and yielding as he appeared in all points of contest with the Holy See, did not fail to levy the tax in question.[m]

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But, although the royal power might be competent to compel the ecclesiastical body to contribute, like the other subjects, ordinarily and extraordinarily, towards the wants of the state; there existed another species of assistance, some times demanded from the clergy, to which the crown was totally inadequate to enforce submission, without obtaining the specific and formal consent of the sovereign

Alienation of the lands of the church.

[m] Lettres de Foix, p. 534—542, and 552—554.

pon-

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pontiffs. Even the sanction of the Parliaments and States General could not give it efficacy, if the supreme head of the church withheld his permission. The alienation of the lands belonging to the clergy, formed a resource, to which the calamities and poverty produced by the civil wars, necessitated the French kings to apply more than once, for relief. There were no less than five distinct and separate alienations made of the temporalities of the church, between the accession of Charles the Ninth in 1560, and the close of his brother's reign in 1589; nor can we estimate their aggregate amount, at a smaller annual sum than two hundred thousand crowns[n]. It is not so easy to ascertain the sum of money levied by the sale of these lands; more particularly as in the disordered state of the finances, every peculation was practised with impunity. A *Bull* from the court of Rome was published, in order to give validity to each of the acts of alienation; and Pius the Fifth, when he signified his assent in 1568, to a grant for selling lands to the value of twenty-five thousand crowns a year, annexed to it the clause or condition, that "the "money could only be employed against the "Protestants[o]." His successor, Gregory the Thirteenth, peremptorily refused the Duke of Joyeuse, deputed for that purpose by the King, to the court of Rome, to allow of any diminu-

Papal approbation, indispensable.

[n] L'Etoile, p. 89 and 90. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 293. Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 52 and 53.

[o] Trad. de l'Hop. ibid.

tion

tion of the ecclesiastical property[p]. Even after the Papal approbation obtained by Henry the Third in 1586, for alienating fifty thousand crowns of the church revenues; the clergy, by the mouth of the Bishop of Noyon, as their representative, did not hesitate to make the boldest reclamations against the royal tyranny; and to state as a crime, that the French princes, since the accession of Francis the First, had pretended to render the ecclesiastics tributary to the sovereign. The harangue was pronounced before the parliament of Paris; and though it excited the indignation of that court, ever prompt to defend the national privileges, yet no resentment seems to have been expressed by the King, for so extraordinary a resistance to his edicts.[q]

Resistance of the clergy.

Enormous abuses of various kinds, had crept into the Gallican church, during the course of the sixteenth century; and they naturally augmented under so profligate and licentious a reign, as that of the last of the princes of Valois. In 1579, no less than twenty-eight bishopricks had become vacant, the temporalities of which sees were possessed by laymen, and where the religious service was altogether neglected. In some provinces, scarcely a bishop could be found, who resided in his diocese; and the abbeys stood in a similar predicament[r]. A commission, armed with very ample powers of enquiry, and authorized to punish, or to redress

Abuses.

[p] Busbeq. Letter 24. p. 154.
[q] L'Etoile, p. 89 and 90.
[r] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 93.

miscon-

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misconduct in ecclesiastics of every rank, was sent from the crown, thro'out all France, in that year. But it may be much doubted whether the attempt was productive either of reform, or of benefit[s]. The practice of naming or collating gentlemen, soldiers, and even children, to church preferments, was not only common; but received a sanction from the see of Rome, in many instances. We find Gregory the Thirteenth, though otherwise a pontiff of decent conduct, and even of severe manners, yet permitting these indecorous, or scandalous nominations. In 1582, he confirmed the grand Prior of Champagne, a knight of Malta, in the dignity of Abbot of the monastery of La Trappe[t]. It is true that he objected to naming a monk whom the French embassador recommended, to fill the bishoprick of Agde in Languedoc, because it was notorious that the revenues of the see had been, during many years, sequestered to the use of Marshal Montmorenci. But he voluntarily proposed to confirm the same monk in the episcopal dignity, and to assign a considerable portion of the temporalities to a natural son of Montmorenci.

Nomination of laics, to benefices.

Instances.

Peter de Bourdeilles, better known as Brantome, so celebrated for his Memoirs, which sufficiently prove him to have been a dissolute courtier, destitute of morals; was provided by Henry the Second, with the abbey from which he derived his title, situate in the

[s] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 607.
[t] Letters de Foix, p. 256 and 257. [u] Ibid. Letter 52, p. 580.

pro-

province of Perigord. "The King gave it "me," says he, "when I was very young, in "recompence for my brother's head, which "was carried off by a cannon ball, at the siege "of Hesdin. I have always governed it so "well, that in three changes of Abbots, suc-"cessively named by the kings of France, and "confirmed by the popes, no fault has been "found. It is only worth three thousand Livres "annual revenue, of which I am obliged to give "considerably more than half to the Abbot, "who is likewise compelled to pay very large "taxes, and to make considerable repairs. "One of my Abbots, a most worthy man, was "poisoned; but the King, understanding that "I was still alive, refused to dispose of the "abbey [x]." These ecclesiastical preferments were considered by the sovereign, as a mode of providing for the gentlemen and officers who grew old in the military service, or who languished in attendance on the court. They were frequently conferred on men of letters and artists. Philibert de Lorme, the architect of the palace of the Tuilleries, was rewarded with a donation of the abbey of Livry, in the vicinity of Paris [y]. Ronsard the poet, received from the bounty of Charles the Ninth, the Priory of St. Come in Touraine, at which place he died [z]. Desportes, another votary of the muses, who was equally beloved by Henry the Third, pos-

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[x] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 264—267.

[y] Vie de Ronsard, p. 144. [z] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 413.

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sessed the three abbeys of Josaphat, Bonport, and Vanne[a]. In 1588, Henry the Third recommended to the States, in his speech from the throne, the reformation of an abuse which savoured so strongly of impiety.[b]

Profanations.

Profanations far greater were committed, if we may credit the best contemporary writers. Ladies became possessed of dignities or benefices in the church. The council of state was not ashamed in 1579, to adjudge a bishoprick to a woman of distinction; and they were regarded as constituting a portion of inheritance, in many families[c]. Children received them, while still in infancy[d]. In the first year of his reign, Henry the Third, on his arrival in France from Poland, conferred the two episcopal sees of Amiens and Grenoble, become vacant by the death of the Cardinal of Crequy, on du Gua, one of his favorites, who had the profligacy to dispose of them again by sale: for the former bishoprick, he procured near thirteen hundred pounds; and for the latter, above seventeen hundred[e]. The decency and dignity of religion were hardly less wounded, by the pluralities common among the great ecclesiastics. We cannot without astonishment read of the number of preferments held by one person, who was often a foreigner, or resident in other countries.

Sale of bishopricks.

Pluralities.

[a] L'Etoile, p. 88. Journal d'Henry IV. vol. i. p. 157.
[b] De Thou, vol. x. p. 387.
[c] Ibid. vol. viii. p. 93 and 94.
[d] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 97.
[e] Ibid. p. 47 and 48.

Hyppo-

Hyppolito d'Esté, Cardinal of Ferrara, held eight abbeys in different parts of France[f]. The famous Cardinal du Bellay, a prelate of distinguished talents, who died at Rome in 1560, was Archbishop of Bourdeaux, and Bishop of Paris, Mans, and Limoges[g]. Besides the archiepiscopal see of Rheims, and the bishoprick of Metz, the Cardinal of Lorrain was possessed of many abbeys and inferior benefices.[h]

Dissolution of manners.

The vices naturally connected with wealth, characterized the superior clergy, who completed by the bad example which they exhibited, the general dissolution of manners. Louis, Cardinal of Guise, who died in 1578, was notorious for debaucheries, epicurism, and gluttony[i]. From his inordinate love of wine, he was commonly called in derision, "Le Car- "dinal des Bouteilles." Of his nephew, the second Cardinal of Guise, put to death at Blois, Sixtus the Fifth himself said, that "he had "nothing of a Cardinal, except the hat." Not satisfied with disgracing his profession by every species of profligacy and immorality, he did not hesitate to put himself at the head of four hundred lancemen, and to engage in enterprizes equally sanguinary and treasonable in their nature[k]. The Duke of Epernon reproached the

Examples.

[f] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 759.
[g] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 18.
[h] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 278.
[i] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 645. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 91.
[k] Lettre du Car. de Joyeuse, dans les Mem. de Villeroi, vol. ii. p. 209—211. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 111.

Arch-

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Archbishop of Lyons, in the presence of the King himself, with living in an open state of incestuous commerce with his own sister, and making a shameful traffic of every thing sacred in his diocese. So avowed or unquestionable were the facts, that the prelate did not even pretend to deny them, although he resented their disclosure [l]. Du Perron, who rose by his talents and graces, to the highest dignities of the Romish church, made no scruple of prostituting his genius, to immortalize the profligate and adulterous amours of Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre. In 1574, he composed some elegant verses, at that princess's request, in the nature of a monody, upon the death of her lover, La Mole, executed by order of Charles the Ninth [m]. Nine years afterwards, in November, 1583, the same ecclesiastic assisting at the table of the King, where a croud of courtiers were present, maintained by many solid arguments, the existence of a Deity, and demonstrated the folly of Atheism. Pleased with his discourse, Henry commended it with the warmest marks of approbation. "Sire," said du Perron, "I have to-"day proved that there is a God: to-morrow, "if it shall please your majesty to grant me au-"dience, I will evince by reasons equally good, "that there is no Deity." Dissolute and relaxed as was Henry the Third in certain parts

Du Perron.

Impiety of his conduct.

[l] De Thou, vol. x. p. 238. Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 183 and 184.

[m] Vie de Marg. p. 137.

of

of his conduct, he expressed the utmost horror at such a proposition, and commanded Du Perron instantly to quit his presence. [n]

Depravity and abuses.

We may see in the Manifesto of Marshal Montmorenci, published in November, 1574, to what a degree the vices of the great ecclesiastics had infected the whole order, and how total was the abandonment and venality of the clergy throughout France [o]. The depravity of the monastic orders was not less notorious. In 1577, a common prostitute was discovered in the convent of the Cordeliers at Paris, who had remained ten years concealed among those holy fathers [p]. Under the successive reigns of the three sons of Henry the Second, it was not uncommon to see prelates of the highest rank, who continued to retain their preferments, though well known to have renounced the Catholic religion. Brantome enumerates several, who did not cease to exercise the episcopal functions, after embracing Calvinism, or Lutheranism [q]. Odet de Chatillon, brother to the famous Admiral Coligni, himself a Cardinal, Archbishop of Toulouse, and Bishop of Beauvais, not only persisted to hold those dignities after he had become a Hugonot; but he publickly solemnized his marriage with a lady of the court. She was even received as his wife, in the drawing-room of Catherine of Medicis;

[n] L'Etoile, p. 73.
[o] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 134.
[p] L'Etoile. p. 26 and 27.
[q] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 262, and p. 263; and vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 258 and 259.

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and was seated in the presence of the Queen-mother, as a peeress, in her quality of Countess of Beauvais. The common people denominated her "Madame la Cardinale[r]." These relaxations of discipline were however, it must be owned, reluctantly tolerated by the French kings, from motives of policy, or of state necessity.

Institution of the penitents.

A phenomenon, reserved for the time of Henry the Third, was the appearance and institution of the orders of penitents. In the beginning of his reign, during his stay at Avignon in 1574, he first saw these devotees, and associated himself to their confraternity. There were three sorts, distinguished by their respective colors. Those of the King, were white; those of the Queen-mother, black; and the blue penitents belonged to the Cardinal of Armagnac. Catherine of Medicis, and even the young King of Navarre, afterwards Henry the Fourth, then detained in confinement, mixed in these cavalcades, covered or disguised with a sack. The Cardinal of Lorrain lost his life by following their example, bareheaded, and barefoot: he was seized in consequence of his imprudence, with a violent fever on the brain,

Opposition made to them.

of which he expired at Avignon[s]. Notwithstanding the King's natural propensity to encourage such mummeries, by his presence and exhortations; yet the manly and spirited re-

[r] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 354—356. Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 37.

[s] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 164 and 165. L'Etoile, p. 9 and 10.

mon-

monstrances of Christopher de Thou, First President of the Parliament of Paris, prevented their complete reception and establishment in France, during several years. That able and upright magistrate represented to his sovereign, the pernicious tendency of ceremonies, only calculated to extinguish among the lower orders, the spirit of real piety, discipline, and obedience to the civil authority. It was not till after his decease, that Henry, in the following year 1583, yielding to his natural inclinations, instituted a confraternity of penitents at Paris, gave them rules of discipline, and rendered them permanent. It is hard to say whether devotion, hypocrisy, or weakness of mind, formed the predominant movements by which he was influenced in this act; but there can be no doubt, that the institution itself tended to degrade and vilify him in the estimation of his subjects, and of mankind. [t]

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Prelates, noblemen, members of the long robe, and citizens, were all admitted and invited to become members of the society of Penitents. Their dress was a sort of sack, which concealed completely the wearer, leaving only two holes cut in front of the hood, in order to enable him to see his way. On the left shoulder, was fastened a cross of white sattin. White linen composed the materials of the sack itself, which descended to the feet [u]. Wrapt in this

Their dress.

[t] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 68 and 69. L'Etoile, p. 64—67.
[u] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 32 and 33.

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disguise, Henry the Third marched in slow procession, through the principal streets of his own capital, undistinguished from the other penitents. During the remainder of his reign, the ceremony was continually repeated; and it lasted during the greater part of the night, accompanied with music, and followed by multitudes of people. Cardinals, minions, magistrates, and persons of every description composed the procession, which was not exempt from many disorders and indecencies, naturally to be expected from such a masquerade[x]. It seems scarcely credible that the King should voluntarily debase the majesty of the throne so far, as to go on foot, in the habit of a penitent, from Paris to Chartres; and to return in the same grotesque disguise, accompanied by about sixty of his companions, habited like himself. He performed this species of pilgrimage, in March, 1586, when he was near thirty-five years of age[y]. Felix Perretti, who had raised himself from the low condition of a private monk of the meanest extraction, to the elevation of the chair of St. Peter, could not restrain the emotions of his contempt, at the relation made him of conduct so unworthy a great monarch. "I "have done my utmost," said Sixtus, "to libe- "rate myself from the monastic profession; "and the King of France exerts his endeavours "to enter into it." Even the pages and lac-

Pilgrimages.

[x] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 32—34. L'Etoile, p. 64—67. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 46.

[y] L'Etoile, p. 90 and 91.

queys

queys of the court, were sensible to the ridicule attending the processions of penitents; and Henry caused near a hundred and twenty of them, who for their diversion had counterfeited the ceremony and the dress, to be severely chastized for their offence, in the kitchens of the Louvre. [z]

Ridicule of them.

So contagious notwithstanding became the example exhibited by the sovereign, and so disposed was the age to every sort of superstition, that the people in the provinces speedily imitated the model of the capital. Their passion for exercises of devotion and austerity, was greatly encreased by the ravages of a pestilential distemper, which in 1583 desolated France. Crouds of penitents arrived at Paris, from the neighbouring districts. On the 10th of September of that year, between eight and nine hundred persons of both sexes, many of whom had not attained to years of maturity, entered the metropolis. All of them were disguised in sacks, bearing in their hands, either lighted tapers, or wooden crosses; the procession being conducted by two gentlemen on horseback, with their wives in a coach, habited in a similar manner [a]. Five other companies of penitents followed, in the course of the same month; and such was the inconceivable frenzy which manifested itself thro'out the kingdom, that ten

Superstition of the people.

Provincial processions.

[z] Busbeq. Letter 8th, p. 116 and 117. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 160.

[a] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 168. L'Etoile, p. 71. Busbeq. Letter 25. p. 158 and 159.

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or twelve thousand are said to have visited the shrine of "our lady of Liesse," near Rheims, who were principally natives of the Ardennes, a portion of Flanders. [b]

Passion of Henry the Third, for these observances.

Notwithstanding the general derision or contempt which Henry incurred by practices so unbecoming his station, he persisted in his adherence to them during his whole life. It was considered as a mark of peculiar favor, to be admitted or allowed to wear the uniform of the penitents; and the young nobility emulated the distinction, as an omen of their future elevation [c]. The King, not satisfied with his public devotions, was accustomed to retire at stated intervals, to the convent which he had constructed in the wood of the castle of Vincennes, not far from Paris; where, immured with his companions of the order of the Hieronimites, he seemed to lay down the functions of a prince, and to assume those of a recluse. It can scarcely be believed that he carried the monastic rage to such a length, as to deliver, himself, in person, the sermon or exhortation, to the fraternity on particular occasions [d]. The jolly monks of St. Francis, who met at Mednenham abbey in Buckinghamshire, for the purposes of conviviality, in the beginning of the reign of George the Third; a society of which the late Lord le Despenser, and the celebrated Mr. Wilkes, were both members; had likewise

[b] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 168.
[c] Sully, vol. i. p 40.
[d] L'Etoile, p. 88.

their

their statutes, their symbols, and their mysterious rites, if we may believe contemporary authority, which last were celebrated with as much solemnity, as the mysteries of the "Bona "Dea" in antiquity. That confraternity bore some resemblance to the Hieronimites, tho' pleasure, not devotion, formed the sole object of their pursuit. When we reflect on the extraordinary marks of puerile or degrading superstition, exhibited by Henry the Third, we are almost led to question the sanity of his intellects; and it cannot excite amazement, that "the League" should have formed the project of immuring him for life in a monastery. The vices of which he was too justly suspected, and which his retirements were calculated to favor or conceal, rendered him not only odious, but contemptible. It is well known that the Duchess of Montpensier, sister to Henry, Duke of Guise, wore even when in the royal presence, a pair of golden scissars suspended at her girdle, with which she did not scruple to declare, that she hoped to perform the operation of the tonsure on the King, holding his head between her knees[c]. He had assumed for his device, two crowns, in allusion to those of France and of Poland, with the motto,

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Contempt, incurred by them.

"Manet ultima cœlo."

In derision, "the League" caused the following distich to be composed:

[c] De Thou, vol. x. p. 445.

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" Qui dedit ante duas, unam abstulit; altera nutat;
" Tertia, tonsoris est facienda manu." [f]

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Similar institutions.

Besides the order of penitents, Henry instituted in May, 1585, a private confraternity, called "the Society of the Brothers of Death;" of which he had seen the model among the Poles, during his short residence in that country. Only twenty-one members or brothers, were admitted into the company, all of whom were named by the King: their dress was black; and the statutes, composed by him likewise, betray a gloomy, eccentric, and disordered imagination [g]. Never was any period more deeply tinctured with superstition, or more destitute of real piety and morality.

Procession of the penitents to Chartres.

But, the most grotesque and singular exhibition presented under this reign, was the procession of penitents deputed by the Parisians in May, 1588, to wait on Henry at Chartres, with a view of deprecating his resentment, and persuading him to return to the metropolis. The circumstances attending it seem so incredible, that if we did not receive them from an eye-witness, an historian of equal gravity and veracity, they could scarcely obtain belief. Nothing can more forcibly depicture the genius and character of the age, when such indecent and scandalous profanations were frequent, and excited neither horror nor disgust. Thirty-five

[f] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 199.
[g] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 47—51.

brothers

brothers of the order of the penitents, followed by a vast crowd of other persons, all barefoot, were conducted by the Count of Bouchage, who in the course of the preceding year, had embraced the monastic profession. He was a brother of the Duke of Joyeuse who fell at Coutras, and had been induced, in order to awaken the sympathy or compassion of the King, to represent on this occasion, the person of our Saviour ascending Mount Calvary. His head was encircled with a crown of thorns; and on his forehead were painted drops of blood. His hands were tied behind him; while on his shoulder he bore or dragged, a long cross of painted pasteboard, under the oppressive weight of which he appeared to be sinking. At intervals he threw himself upon the ground, uttering lamentable groans. Two young Capuchin Friars, on each side of him, dressed for the purpose, appeared in the characters of the Virgin Mary, and of the Magdalen. Four other monks, wildly attired, held the cords with which the principal actor was bound; while with their scourges, they frequently inflicted on his back a severe discipline. Accustomed as Henry was, and partial as he might be esteemed to such spectacles, he felt the impiety and profanation attached to a mockery of one of the most sacred mysteries of religion. He even reproached Bouchage with his credulity and zeal, which rendered him an instrument in the hands of "the League;" many of whose adherents had the

Description of that ceremony.

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the audacity to mix in the crowd, disguised under the penitential sack.[h]

1574—1589. Religious processions.

Processions of every kind, intended either to conciliate the divine favor, or to deprecate its wrath, characterized the reign of the last of the princes of Valois. They were encouraged, and usually conducted, by the Cardinal of Bourbon, a weak and superstitious prelate, who acted a distinguished, though only a subordinate part, in the troubles caused by the house of Guise. In July, 1587, he headed a procession at Paris, composed of persons of both sexes, and of every age, in which the seven shrines of St. Germain were carried by men in their shirts, without other dress. Torches of wax were borne by all the assistants. Henry, at a moment when cares of state ought to have occupied his whole attention, and when foreign armies conspiring with domestic enemies, were preparing to desolate his dominions; was not ashamed to mix among so motley a crew, habited as a penitent, and to commend the order of its march[i]. Crouds of devotees, from Champagne, Picardy, and Lorrain, dressed in white, and ornamented with crosses; quitting their occupations, and abandoning the cultivation of the country, continued to arrive in the capital. They proved

[h] De Thou, cited by D'Anquetil, in the Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 30—33. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 61 and 62. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 248.

[i] L'Etoile, p. 101 and 102. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 654.

highly subservient to the designs of the Duke of Guise, who under shelter of the concealment, contrived to introduce his partizans, and to prepare for the insurrection which soon afterwards took place.[k]

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Political consequences of them.

During the short period of about seven months, which intervened between the assassination of that prince at Blois, and the death of the King himself; when the minds of men were inflamed beyond measure, from the events of the moment, the rage for processions attained to its highest point. It seemed almost to partake of frenzy among the Parisians, and to have perverted the exercise of reason. The people rose in multitudes, during the night; and notwithstanding the severity of the season, clamorously compelled the priests and curates to lead them in procession. Even the rigor of the weather did not induce them to wear any clothes; and they paraded through the streets, in their shirts only, insensible to every obstacle or inconvenience[l]. The most libertine and scandalous excesses were committed with impunity, under the protection of the darkness, in these promiscuous assemblies, composed of men, women, and children. Ladies of gallantry found them too convenient, not to profit of the occasions; and so notorious were the debaucheries acted, that the few priests who had not sacrificed every consideration of morals or religion,

Frenzy of the Parisians, for processions.

Libertinism and debauchery.

[k] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 654.
[l] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 270—272.

to

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to the spirit of rebellion, endeavoured, though ineffectually, to stop such dissolute proceedings. We can hardly believe that many thousand children of both sexes, carrying each a taper in their hands, after traversing the capital, extinguished them at the same time, trampling them under foot, and exclaiming, "God "extinguishes the race of Valois!" Scarcely any example of national madness to be found in the annals of mankind, can equal that of the French people, at the conclusion of the reign of Henry the Third. The Duke of Nevers, who flourished at that time, and whose memoirs bear testimony to the enlargement of his understanding, considers the Parisians as under the influence of a contagious delirium, or an infectious distemper, only to be compared to the hooping cough[m]. De Thou, a contemporary, and a spectator of the scene, seems to conceive that nations, like individuals, are subject to paroxysms of frenzy, which visit them periodically; and the events of the late French Revolution, unparalleled in atrocity, precisely at the distance of two hundred years, might induce us to adopt the opinion of that sagacious and enlightened historian[n]. There is indeed a striking similarity in the features that characterize the two periods. The Parisians of the eighteenth century were fond of processions,

Processions of children.

Sentiment of De Thou, on the madness of nations.

[m] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 935 and 936.

[n] De Thou, vol. x. p. 529. Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 61 and 62. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 119. Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 270—272.

like

like their ancestors of the time of Henry the Third; but the Virgin Mary was replaced by the goddess of reason, and the Marseillois hymn succeeded to the Requiems or litanies of the Catholic church. The detestation of royalty was common to both ages; and the hatred felt towards the family of Bourbon in 1792, was equal to the antipathy with which the race of Valois was regarded under the last prince of that Dynasty. If Henry perished by the knife, Louis suffered on the scaffold. Both fled from their capitals. A period of revolutionary anarchy succeeded the death of each sovereign. But, the great qualities of Henry the Fourth rescued and restored the monarchy in the former instance; while France, after the most awful convulsions, has now been long sunk under the iron sceptre and the flagitious tyranny of a foreign adventurer, stained with crimes and turpitudes.

Declamations from the pulpit.

The year 1583, which witnessed the origin of the order of penitents, was likewise the era whence may be dated another characteristic feature of this period of general disorder and insurrection. By a singular fatality, a prince who had always loaded the ecclesiastics, and particularly the monastic orders, with marks of affection bordering on weakness, found in them his most dangerous and implacable enemies. Poncet, a monk, possessed of a species of eloquence adapted to the audience whom he was accustomed to address, and restrained by no sentiments of respect for the person of his sovereign; led the way, by the gross insinuations

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tions which he uttered, to the bolder invectives that followed, after Henry's flight from the metropolis. He did not scruple to accuse the members composing the new confraternity, with the guilt of hypocrisy and atheism. We may form an idea of the style of the pulpit declamation in that age, from Poncet's discourses. "I have been informed," said he, "that after "their procession, the spit turned for the sup- "per of these jolly penitents; and that from "devouring a fat capon, they proceeded to "complete their repast, by a delicate young "girl kept in readiness for the night. Ah! "miserable hypocrites! Is it thus that you jest "with God under a mask, and carry at your "girdle a scourge? It is not there, that it "ought to be placed, but upon your backs and "shoulders: there is not one of you, who has "not amply deserved it!" The only punishment inflicted on him, for so insolent an attack, in which allusion was made to the King without any disguise, consisted in his temporary removal from Paris, by Henry's order, to the abbey of St. Peter at Melun [o]. Encouraged by so injudicious a lenity, the evil spread with prodigious rapidity. After the assassination of the Guises, no measures were observed by the preachers, who only seemed to vie with each other in the violent and treasonable appellations, bestowed by them on their sovereign.

Lenity of Henry the Third, pernicious.

Impiety, and indecency of the preachers.

[o] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist, de Fr. p. 159 and 160. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 69.

Many

Many of them are too repugnant to our ideas of decorum, even to be transcribed, and far exceed in virulence the declamations of Knox, against Mary, Queen of Scots. Regicide was publickly enjoined and recommended by the clergy. Scriptural citations of the most impious nature, were applied to the Duchess of Nemours, mother to the Duke and Cardinal, recently put to death at Blois. She was compared to the Virgin Mary, as Henry was to Herod.[p] Collects and forms of prayer, or rather of imprecation, were composed by the Sorbonne, invoking the vengeance of Heaven against their late King. Several of these productions are preserved, which forcibly demonstrate the violence of the times.[q]

Imprecations.

Reprehensible in the extreme as were the excesses committed by the clergy who took part with "the League," they were, if possible, exceeded by the detestable doctrines which the Catholic priests in general promulgated from the pulpit, in many of the provinces. There is an original letter still in being, written by Henry, King of Navarre, to his mistress, Corisande d'Andouins, dated the 17th of March, 1588, from the province of Saintonge, in which he expressly says; "The Romish preachers, in "all the cities of this country, commend the

Detestable doctrines promulgated.

[p] L'Etoile, p. 113 and 115, and 123. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 272.

[q] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 269 and 270. Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 82. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 118. De Thou, vol. x. p. 527.

"act

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"act of poisoning the Prince of Condé; de-
"clare, that there is only one more to be desir-
"ed; canonise the murder, and the murderer;
"nay, admonish every good Catholic, to take
"example by so Christian an enterprize[r]." It is not possible more strongly to depicture the savage and sanguinary spirit, which pervaded every class of men in that age, when religious enmity had almost extinguished the sentiments of humanity. Perhaps we ought in candour to add that Tavannes accuses the Hugonots of having advanced similar tenets and principles; if not from the pulpit, yet in their two famous publications, entitled the "Reveille Matin," and the "Tocsin des François," both written at an early period of the civil wars.[s]

Asylums.

Among the abuses produced by superstition, tending in an eminent degree to spread through the lower orders of people, the contagion of vice, must be enumerated the existence and sanctity of asylums. These institutions, originating in ignorance and barbarism, were perverted to purposes the most subversive of all justice or good order. One of the most celebrated sanctuaries during the period before us, was that of St. Romain, at Rouen. By the letters patent of Louis the Twelfth, confirming its privileges, persons guilty of treason, false coiners, and some others of a similar description,

St. Romain's at Rouen.

[r] Lettres origin. d'Henry IV., dans les Œuvres de Voltaire, vol. x. p. 234 and 235. Henry, Prince of Condé, was poisoned in 1588.

[s] Tavannes, p. 217.

were

were excepted from the right of protection. But, during the time when the see of Rouen was occupied by the Cardinal of Bourbon, the asylum of St. Romain became a refuge for criminals of every degree. Its short distance from the metropolis, and the rigid support given by the Archbishop, to the right of sanctuary, induced numbers to fly to it, in order to elude the pursuit of the laws. From a sense of gratitude to their protector, they readily entered into the great conspiracy formed by "the League," against the royal authority and the state, of which the Cardinal became a voluntary instrument. The parliament of Rouen, deeply sensible of the impediments thrown in the way of justice, by the continuance of such a privilege, made repeated, but ineffectual applications to the King, for his interposition. The careless apathy of that prince, rendered him insensible to their salutary remonstrances. An assembly of princes and counsellors of state having been convoked by Henry in 1583, where the reformation of the courts of law formed a principal object of consideration; La Guesle, president of the parliament of Paris, harangued with eloquence and force, upon the pernicious nature and tendency of the asylum of St. Romain. The Cardinal of Bourbon, indignant at the attack upon the immunities of his see, instantly threw himself at the King's feet, and implored that La Guesle might be compelled to make satisfaction to himself, and to the church of Rouen, for so scandalous an

Abuse arising from it.

Ineffectual attempt to procure its suppression.

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outrage. The emotion of the prelate only excited ridicule, but the abuse of which complaint was made, continued to exist in all its force.[t]

Relics.

In no instance, does the credulity and folly of the vulgar seem to have been more abused, than in the article of relics. We find the same gross deceptions, which had been practised and exposed among the English, at the time of the Reformation under Henry the Eighth, still subsisting in France, more than twenty years later, at the commencement of the civil wars. It would be endless to cite examples of this fact. At the capture of the city of Tours by the Prince of Condé, in 1562, the shrine of St. Martin, one of the richest and most celebrated in the kingdom, which might vie with that of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, was plundered by his soldiers. Among other sacred ornaments, was found a gem, regarded as a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and held in high veneration. Beza, on inspection, ascertained it to be an antique agat of Venus, weeping over the body of Adonis. A silver arm of a saint, found in the same place, on being opened, was discovered to contain a knave of spades, and a love song. At Bourges, capital of the province of Berri, the Hugonots broke to pieces a relic, within which appeared a small wheel, turning on a piece of wood; and round it was a billet, containing these lines:

"Quand cette Roue tournera,
"Cette que j'ayme, m'aymera."[u]

[t] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 83—86.

[u] Theod. Beza. Histoire Ecclesiast. liv. vii. p. 583 and 584. Confess. de Sancy, p. 463—465.

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In order to form a perfect idea of the political strength of France, during the period under our consideration, it is indispensable to take a survey of the state of the Hugonots. Notwithstanding the persecutions which they had suffered, the wars sustained by them, and the massacres repeatedly perpetrated by order of the court, or by the enmity of the Catholics; they still continued to form an equally numerous and formidable body. In the northern and eastern provinces, they were indeed comparatively few; but, thro'out Dauphiné, and along the shore of the Mediterranean, from Nismes and Montpellier, to the foot of the Pyrenees, they constituted a large proportion of the inhabitants. Their principal force was nevertheless concentered between the river Loire and the Garonne; comprising a rich, maritime, and commercial tract of country, in which, open to the Atlantic, was situated Rochelle, the capital. The genius of their government, both civil and ecclesiastical, partook more of a democratic, than of any other form; tempered notwithstanding by a mixture of aristocracy, and greatly under the influence of their clergy, as well as of their municipal magistrates. Previous to the commencement of the first civil wars in 1562, the cities of the Protestant communion, in imitation of Geneva, a Calvinistic republic, had formed the plan of excluding the nobility from any participation in the political power and authority. But, when in consequence of the superior forces of the Crown and the Catholics,

State of the Hugonots, at this period.

Numbers.

Genius of their government, republican.

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they found themselves ready to be crushed, it became indispensable to call to their assistance the princes of Bourbon. After the battle of Jarnac in 1569, Coligni obtained over the whole Hugonot party, an empire the most unlimited, which he exercised till his death, three years later. His great services, his rank, age, and sincere attachment to the cause, when joined with the perilous situation of their affairs, overcame all competition. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which Coligni, and so great a number of the Protestant nobility perished, emancipated the party from this servitude; and after successfully combating the Crown, they determined not to subject themselves voluntarily to any species of government, except a republic.[x]

Power of Coligni.

Duke of Alenson.

It was in vain that Francis, Duke of Alenson, attempted by affecting a regard for their interests, to acquire any permanent ascendant in their counsels. Even while that prince headed the Hugonot armies against his brother Henry the Third, his conduct was watched with jealous and suspicious attention. The city of Rochelle in 1576, far from admitting him to exercise the slightest portion of authority, refused him the restitution of a few pieces of cannon, and rejected his request of aiding him by a pecuniary loan[y]. During the whole period between 1576 and 1589, the King of Navarre, and his cousin the Prince of Condé, either openly or in secret, exerted their endeavours to be respec-

Rivality of Navarre, and Condé.

[x] Tavannes, p. 394. [y] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 431.

tively

tively recognized protector of the Protestants. The former, as being more nearly allied to the crown, seemed to possess a superior claim; but many circumstances inclined them to prefer the prince, his cousin. The gravity of his natural disposition, and his aversion to every kind of libertinism or dissipation, appeared more analagous to the severe spirit of the Hugonot religion, than the character of his competitor, gallant, amorous, and fond of pleasure. The death of Louis, Prince of Condé, slain at Jarnac, pleaded moreover in his son's behalf; and he manifested all the qualities requisite for so arduous a station. The King of Navarre notwithstanding, finally obtained the preference, though it amounted to little more than a nominal supremacy[z]. A slender pension was assigned to Condé, precisely as the states of Flanders, nearly at the same period, had done by the Arch-duke Matthias, when they dispensed with his further services. But it was not till after a long negotiation and many delays, that the magistrates of Rochelle admitted the Prince to make his entry into that city, in November, 1576. He was only accompanied on the occasion by a few followers; and he quitted the place soon afterwards, when he retired to the town of St. John d'Angely, his usual residence.[a]

Independance of Rochelle.

The King of Navarre could not attain to any greater personal consideration, notwithstanding the numerous sacrifices which he made to his religious faith, and the zealous interest that he

[z] Tavannes, p. 394. Chron. Nov. vol. i p. 88. Davila, p. 456.
[a] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 438—441.

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took in the welfare of the Hugonot body. Even after his escape from Paris in 1576, and his public resumption of the Protestant doctrines and worship, he could scarcely obtain permission to enter Rochelle, attended by fifty horsemen. The inhabitants, assembled under arms in great numbers, and reinforced by those of the neighbouring islands, Rhé and Oleron, received him with apparent demonstrations of affection and respect, while they took every precaution to secure themselves against any enterprize on his part[b]. A degree of competition and rivality constantly subsisted between the two princes of Bourbon, during the reign of Henry the Third, which might have produced consequences fatal to the interests of both, if they had not been terminated by the premature and lamentable death of the Prince of Condé.

Struggle of Condé, to supplant the King of Navarre.

A short time only before that tragical event, after the victory at Coutras in November, 1587, his brother-in-law, the Duke de la Tremouille, one of the great nobility attached to the Protestant cause, urged the Prince to render himself independant sovereign in the provinces of Anjou, Poitou, and Saintonge; a scheme which he seemed not averse to have attempted without delay.[c]

Foreign competitors of that Prince.

The King of Navarre had foreign, as well as domestic competitors, with whom to contend, for the title of Protector of the Hugonots. In a synod held at Montauban in Upper Langue-

[b] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 429 and 430.
[c] Sully, vol. i. p. 60 and 61.

doc,

doc, it was proposed to confer that dignity on John Casimir, son to Frederic the Third, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, who had repeatedly sent or conducted troops, to the assistance of the professors of the reformed religion. An annual donation or contribution of one hundred and twenty-five thousand crowns, was destined to accompany the office, in order to retain constantly the superior officers under the standard, besides a fund for paying the soldiery. The misconduct of John Casimir's ministers, deputed to negotiate with the French Protestants, rather than any effectual opposition which it was in the King of Navarre's power to exert, seems to have rendered the plan abortive; but it strongly displays the distrust entertained of that prince [d]. If once any foreign chief of eminence, had become the efficient head and protector of the Hugonots, the civil wars might have been prolonged and perpetuated without end. Even some months after the decease of the Prince of Condé, in November, 1588, when the King of Navarre, as president, convoked and opened the general assembly at Rochelle, he was menaced with a blow subversive of all his measures, for retaining the protectorship of the Protestants. Many persons of quality, and even some of the clergy, were desirous to name separate protectors of their religion in every province of France, which amounted to eighteen in number. In order to elude the stroke,

John Casimir.

Attempt to name protectors of the Hugonots.

[d] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 88.

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he consented to erect six courts or tribunals, in as many of the principal cities, to take cognizance of, and to pass sentence in all causes; peculiarly in those which respected his own officers, who had rendered themselves obnoxious and unpopular, by exacting contributions on various pretences. A proposition so unobjectionable, met with universal approbation, and averted the impending misfortune [e]. Such was the situation of the Hugonot Commonwealth, for so it may be justly denominated, at the close of Henry the Third's reign. The cities scarcely acknowledged any civil authority, except that of the mayors or magistrates; paid few contributions; and resembled the free, imperial cities of Germany. It was not till after the termination of the civil wars, and the auspicious period of peace which ensued under Henry the Fourth, that an alteration took place in these important particulars. [f]

Independance of that body.

Ecclesiastical polity.

In their ecclesiastical polity and tenets of faith, the reformed church of France followed the doctrines of Calvin. Lutheranism had made little progress among them; and the genius of Calvinism, repugnant to all gradations in spiritual preferment, tended to maintain the principles of civil equality. Provincial synods, and general assemblies, composed of delegates from the various orders, were frequently convened, to regulate their internal concerns, or to de-

Synods.

[e] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 87.

[f] Tavannes, p. 394 and 395, and 227.

termine

termine on the most important transactions of peace and war. In these meetings, the King of Navarre always presided, either in person, or by his representative [g]. As early as the year 1555, under Henry the Second's reign, the Protestants began to establish places of religious worship, and to form societies for maintaining the purity of their faith. The first of both kinds was made in Paris itself; an example which spread with amazing rapidity, in defiance of edicts and prohibitions [h]. It would appear, that at no period whatever of the reigns of Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, was the exercise of their religion in private houses and families, altogether suspended in the metropolis, tho' the penalty was capital for the offence. [i]

Numbers of the Hugonots.

The total numbers of the Hugonots thro'out France, must form matter of conjecture, rather than of calculation. They never probably exceeded two millions, even at their highest point; or about a ninth part of the aggregate population. If we were to fix on the period when they attained the meridian of their power and political strength, we should incline to date it, between the colloquy of Poissy in 1561, and the massacre of Paris, eleven years afterwards. During that interval, marked by all the calamities of civil war and religious discord, persecution sustained and inflamed their enthu-

[g] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 87; and vol. x. p. 420 and 421.
[h] Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 644. [i] Sully, vol. i. p. 57.

siasm.

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siasm. The name and aid of successive princes of the blood, the fortitude of Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, the resources of Coligny, and the assistance of foreign powers;—these circumstances enabled them to dispute for pre-eminence with the antient superstition, and almost to subvert the throne itself. If the enterprize of Meaux had not been frustrated by the promptitude and intrepidity of the Switzers, who protected the flight of Charles the Ninth, from that city to Paris; it is hard to say what barrier could have been affixed to the demands or inroads of the Protestants. How generally diffused were the tenets of the reformers, and how universally they were embraced or imbibed, even in the court, we may see from the Memoirs of Margaret of Valois. The Duke of Anjou himself, afterwards Henry the Third, who signalized his early youth by the victories which he obtained over them, had nevertheless previously caught the contagion. "All the court," says Margaret, "was infected with heresy; and pecu-
"liarly my brother of Anjou, since King of
"France, whose childhood had not escaped the
"impression of Hugonotism. He incessantly
"teased me to change my religion; throwing
"my prayer-book into the fire, and giving me
"in their stead, psalms and Hugonot prayers,
"which he compelled me to use. To these
"acts of violence, he added menaces that my
"mother would order me to be whipped[k]."

Diffusion of the reformed doctrines.

[k] Memoires de Marguerite, Paris, 1658, p. 9, 10.

We

We may judge from the force and simplicity of the Queen of Navarre's description, how widely the reformed doctrines had spread, and how favorably they were received among the highest orders of society. The Protestants continued still to be formidable under Henry the Third, tho' their numbers were lessened: but after the accession of the King of Navarre to the throne of France, they began rapidly to diminish. The desertion of that monarch from their party, and his reconciliation to the church of Rome, together with the toleration granted them by him, tended insensibly to draw off all those individuals, who were not animated with fervent zeal for the maintenance of the reformed religion.

Revenues.

It appears impossible to ascertain the revenue of a body of men, whose contributions being in a great measure voluntary, became augmented or diminished according to the exigencies of the time.

Forces.

Their military resources were sufficiently demonstrated by the armies which they raised, and by the celerity exhibited in their levies. We cannot reflect without amazement, that in 1568, the two provinces of Dauphiné and Languedoc only, conducted above twenty-five thousand men to the assistance of Louis, Prince of Condé, collected with surprizing facility. They were equipped, armed, and provided, in the amplest manner. D'Acier, their commander, had in his own company, near two hundred gen-

[k] Memoires de Marguerite, Paris 1658. p. 9, 10.

tlemen.

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tlemen [l]. Notwithstanding the two defeats of Jarnac and of Montcontour, sustained in the following year; the last of which actions cost the Hugonots not less than nine thousand troops; Coligni re-appeared in 1570, at the head of a new army, on the other side of France, in Burgundy. No efforts of equal magnitude were made after the death of that celebrated chief; because the Protestants, disunited, no longer acted with the same promptitude and energy. The King of Navarre did not succeed to Coligni's power and influence; nor did Henry the Third betray the same sentiments towards his Hugonot subjects, which had animated him as Duke of Anjou, when conducting the forces of Charles the Ninth. The edict of Poitiers, granting them toleration, was his own immediate act [m]. It must be admitted that the recommencement of war by the Protestants in 1580, was a wanton and unjustifiable infraction of treaty, produced by the intrigues of the court of Nerac, where women and gallantry directed every measure. So sensible of this fact were the principal cities of the reformed religion, that Rochelle and several other places refused to join in the insurrection [n]. Before 1588, the violent enthusiasm of the Hugonots had greatly subsided; and they were no longer animated by the same spirit, which, under Charles the Ninth, had rendered them invincible, and su-

Renewal of hostilities in 1580, unjustifiable.

[l] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 588 and 589.

[m] De Thou. vol. vii. p. 531. [n] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 225.

perior

perior to defeats or massacres. The lapse of time having insensibly softened the asperity of the two great factions, had calmed their mutual rancour. The Duke of Nevers, writing to Henry the Third, in August, 1588, says, "The "Hugonots have spent all their fire, and are "only on the defensive. Neither cities nor "provinces follow them any longer. The ardor "of novelty is extinct, and there is in fact no-"thing to be feared from them. But 'the "'League' is in its first vigor, and all the world "is attracted to that party[o]." Towards the close of his reign, Henry can only be considered as acting under the impulse of the Guises, who compelled him reluctantly to take up arms against the princes of Bourbon, as the leaders of the Protestants.

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The maritime force of the Hugonots, which was principally maintained and stationed at Rochelle, or in the ports and islands of its vicinity, bore no small proportion to the royal navy of France, and ventured on various occasions, to contend with it for victory. In 1573, the Count of Montgomery commanded fifty-three vessels, when he appeared off the harbour of Rochelle, then closely besieged by the Duke of Anjou. But several of these were unquestionably English ships; twelve were laden with stores; and except two, the whole fleet consisted of vessels not exceeding sixty tons burthen. We may judge of their size,

Maritime force.

[o] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 855.

by

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by the total number of men on board; they not exceeding eighteen hundred, of whom scarcely one thousand were sailors. The ships, very ill equipped, were still worse provided with cannon; and Montgomery found himself unable to effect the object of the expedition, or to attack the royal gallies anchored in the port [p]. But four years afterwards, in 1577, the Protestants possessed a more considerable naval strength. The Prince of Condé then embarked on board their fleet, composed of seventeen upper-decked ships, and as many of inferior size, among which was a Spanish vessel of four hundred tons [q]. Henry's admiral, Lansac, who had under his command no less than sixty sail of different dimensions and descriptions, had been pursued by Clermont d'Amboise, only a short time before, at the head of the Hugonot squadron, and compelled to take refuge in the Garonne [r]. The Protestants do not seem to have been masters of any gallies.

Commerce. Rochelle.

Their commerce, as well as their marine, was almost exclusively confined to Rochelle. That city, advantageously situated on the shore of the Atlantic, and inhabited by a hardy, industrious race of men, accustomed to brave the dangers of the Bay of Biscay, enjoyed even in the midst of civil war, an extensive and lucrative trade. In 1568, they reckoned ten thousand foreign merchants, who visited and carried

[p] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 48.
[q] De Thou, vol. ii. p 513, and p. 516.
[r] Ibid. p. 512.

on

on a traffic to Rochelle [s]. The complete independance of the Hugonots on the crown, which may be said to have taken place in the following year; their civil and religious freedom, their mild internal government, and the spirit of naval or commercial enterprize which characterised the inhabitants; — all these combined causes conduced to render the city prosperous and opulent, notwithstanding the perpetual hostilities in which they were involved. The repulse sustained by the Duke of Anjou under their walls in 1573, at the head of a numerous army, inflamed and exalted their courage. By means of Elizabeth, Queen of England, they received considerable supplies of military and naval stores, for which they made returns in corn and salt [t]. Nor did they confine themselves merely to the fair advantages, derived from a commercial intercourse with other states. They fitted out ships, which cruized in every direction, and captured numbers of trading vessels. In 1569, a large Venetian Carrack, valued at fifty thousand crowns, was attacked near the coast of Brittany, by the vice-admiral of the Hugonot fleet, and carried into Rochelle. She was confiscated to the use of the cause, on very insufficient and slight pretences [v]. Some years afterwards, a Portugueze ship fell into their hands, after an obstinate engagement, near the islands of the Azores: she was reported to have had

Its strength, and resources.

Naval enterprizes.

Captures.

[s] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 549.
[t] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 515. Montluc, Comm. vol. iv. p. 344.
[v] Memoires de Cast. vol. i. p. 261.

on

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on board, a thousand pounds weight of gold in bars[u]. It was difficult to assign any cause for these acts of piracy and violence, except necessity or convenience.

Piracies and plunder.

We may judge how very productive were the naval expeditions equipped for plunder, by the sum derived from them to the Protestant chiefs or princes, in the course of only two years between the commencement of the third civil war in 1568, and its termination in 1570. The share appropriated to the admiralty, was one-tenth of all prizes: and it amounted during that short space of time, to above three hundred thousand Livres, or, more than twelve thousand pounds[x]. After the renewal of war in 1574, the admiralty portion became doubled, and one-fifth part of all captures was assigned to it, for the support of the common cause: yet so considerable a diminution of profit did not deter, or diminish the number of private adventurers. The spirit of rapacity, and the hope of rapidly acquiring wealth, rather than any political necessity, formed the incitement to these enterprizes. Crimes the most revolting and enormous, were frequently committed by the Hugonot cruizers, who not only attacked indifferently almost all European nations, on the high seas; but, threw to the waves even the crews of their allies, in order thereby to conceal their depredations. This fact, however

Crimes perpetrated by the adventurers.

[u] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 267. [x] La Noue, p. 695.

atrocious,

atrocious, is not to be controverted, as we derive it from their own writers. [x] CHAP. III.

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Intolerance, and cruelty of the age.

In an age like the present, distinguished rather by indifference, than by zeal, in matters of religion, we cannot easily expand our minds to conceive the degree of enmity and intolerance, which characterized the period under our consideration. It rose to such a height, that when exacerbated by civil war, it overbore and extinguished every sentiment of private affection, or of general humanity. Repressed in some measure, by the vigorous administration of Francis the First, and of Henry the Second; it burst all limits under the three succeeding princes, and converted the kingdom into a vast burying-ground. Montluc does not scruple to acquaint us, that after having agreed to admit the garrison of a besieged town in Gascony, to capitulate on articles, he privately sent an emissary to enjoin his troops to break into the place while the terms were adjusting, and to put every inhabitant to the sword. The order was executed in its utmost rigor [y]. "I "can assert with truth," says he, "that there "is not a commander of the King in all France, "who has dispatched more Hugonots by the "knife, or by the halter, than myself [z]." When wounded at the storm of Rabasteins, a little place in the province of Bigorre, conceiving himself near his end, his only concern appears to have been, not to allow a single person to escape the

Montluc.

Carnage of Rabasteins.

[x] La Noue, p. 696.
[y] Montluc, Comm. vol. iv. p. 92—94.
[z] Montluc, vol. iv. p. 121.

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general carnage; and he issued peremptory directions for the purpose. Even the women were not spared; and the Catholic soldiery precipitated fifty or sixty of the inhabitants from a tower, as matter of amusement[a]. One of the most atrocious conspiracies ever conceived by bigotry, and undertaken by ambition under the cloak of religion, was that of Philip the Second King of Spain, in concert with the Guises, against Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre. It was planned in 1565, and only failed in its execution, by the imprudence of one of the inferior agents. The intention was no other, than to seize on a sovereign princess, of irreproachable manners, allied to the royal blood of France, in the midst of her court, and in a time of profound peace, in order to deliver her over to the Inquisition. The pretext for an enterprize so flagitious, was the Queen's attachment to heresy; a crime of sufficient magnitude to justify any attempt, however perfidious or cruel, in the opinion of zealous Catholics. Every detail of this abominable and extraordinary transaction, is to be found in Villeroy.[b]

Conspiracy, formed against Jane, Queen of Navarre.

Its atrocious nature.

Savage treatment of the Hugonots.

Even minds naturally susceptible of the most beneficent sentiments towards mankind, became obdurate towards their own countrymen, when of a different persuasion in religion. Louis, Duke of Montpensier, a prince otherwise of a mild and generous character, who commanded

Montpensier.

[a] Montluc, vol. iv. p. 221 and 222.

[b] Villeroy, Memoires, vol. ii. p. 39—58.

the

the royal armies in Poitou, under Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third; was accustomed to put to death by a summary process, every prisoner accused of adherence to the Protestant doctrines, or to deliver them over to the brutal violence of his soldiers. When men were brought before him; "Friend," said he, "you are a "Hugonot; I recommend you to Monsieur "Babelot." This instrument of his cruelty, was no other than a monk of the Franciscan order, who acted the part of judge and of executioner. They were no sooner interrogated, than condemned and massacred. The women, were commonly reserved for the savage embraces of his Guidon, or standard-bearer. Far from exciting horror or indignation, these barbarities served only for subject of conversation, and of indecent raillery, among the ladies of the court, and at the tables of the great. [c]

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John de Champagne, a nobleman of the same period, when residing at his castle of Pescheseul, on the river Sartre, used to throw all the Protestants who fell into his possession, into the stream. He accompanied it with an insulting piece of buffoonery, as performing an act of festivity, rather than a deliberate murder; nor did the laws take any cognizance of such atrocious crimes [f]. The Chevalier d'Aumale, one of the princes of Lorrain, distinguished for the ferocity and brutality of his manners, violated

Other instances.

[c] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 280—282. D'Aub. vol. i. Hist. Univ. p. 135.

[f] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 482.

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even the sanctity of places of public worship; and tho' himself a zealous professor of the Romish faith, committed every species of wanton debauch, or deliberate cruelty, in the Catholic churches. Nuns, and women of condition, were despoiled of their honor, before the high altar, to the foot of which they were dragged by the hair, in presence of their husbands, fathers, and nearest relatives[g]. But, it is in the writings of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, that we find the most accurate information upon a point, which so forcibly delineates the temper and spirit of the age. He is entitled to the greater credit, because, being himself a zealous Hugonot, he is nevertheless far from concealing the outrages committed by his own associates, though he attempts to justify, or to palliate them, on the principle of retribution. St. Pont, a Catholic, commanding at Macon in Burgundy in 1562, usually ordered a certain number of Protestants to be thrown from the bridge into the river Soane, by way of pastime, after the banquets with which he regaled the ladies of the place[h]. We cannot peruse without disgust, as well as horror, the enormities committed at Tours, and at Orange, by the royal troops[i]. Even Coligni himself, however naturally beneficent and mild, was propelled by the sanguinary spirit of the times, to permit, or to authorize, acts of wanton severity. Retaliation or vengeance, seemed

Cruelties exercised.

St. Pont.

[g] Satyre Menip. vol. iii. p. 333, 334.
[h] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 145.
[i] Ibid. p. 130 and 146.

to

to palliate these executions, which became unhappily necessary, in order to impose some restraint on minds inflamed by religious animosity, to a pitch of mutual frenzy.

Monks put to death.

In October, 1562, twelve monks of the order of St. Francis, at Chateau Vilain, having been accused of massacring the sick or wounded Protestants of the army, Coligni caused them to be immediately hanged. Two of their own confraternity voluntarily offered to become the executioners of the others. Ropes were delivered to both, for the purpose; and as an experiment of their respective capacity to perform the office of a hangman, one was ordered to dispatch the other. It afforded a cruel pastime to the spectators, to witness the efforts of these unfortunate men to obtain the preference. "Never," says D'Aubigné, "did the "Retiarii, Laquearii, or Mirmillones of anti-"quity, display before the Romans in the Am-"phitheatre, more address in vanquishing each "other, than did these Cordeliers. One of "them having at length dextrously contrived "to strangle his companion, put to death all "the survivors." He was afterwards retained by the Hugonots, as executioner to the army, and grew very expert in his profession [k]. The pre-eminence in cruelty of every species, was notwithstanding ceded by the universal testimony of his contemporaries, to the Baron des Adrets, who long rendered his name proverbial

Des Adrets.

[k] Confession de Sancy, p. 492, 493, and p. 541.

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for barbarity, in the provinces along the Rhone, where he was at the head of the Hugonot forces [l]. His ordinary mode of dispatching the victims of his fury or enmity, was by precipitating them from a tower, and dashing them in pieces; a spectacle in which he took a savage delight. He was however not inaccessible to pity, nor insensible to wit. Having ordered after his dinner, thirty prisoners taken at Montbrison, whom he had purposely reserved, to precipitate themselves from the edge of the mountain; one of them, terrified, and unable to take the leap, stopt short on the extreme verge. "How!" exclaimed Des Adrets, "you take twice to do it?" "Sir," replied the soldier, "I will give you ten times, in "which to perform it." Charmed with an answer which displayed so much pleasantry and self-possession, in a moment of such peril, he immediately pardoned the man, and exempted him from the fate of his companions. [m]

Anecdote of him.

From the determination of outdoing his enemies in cruelty, and of thus compelling them to carry on war with more humanity, Des Adrets caused the hand and foot of three hundred Catholic gentlemen to be cut off, and sent them in that condition, on carts, to the royal camp. The expedient, terrible as it was, did not fail to produce the intended effect [n]. Such was the ferocity and spirit of persecution, that it per-

Severities of that commander.

[l] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 246—248.
[m] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 147.
[n] Ibid. p. 155.

vaded

vaded every rank and order of society. The Princess, wife of Louis, Prince of Condé, and her eldest son, were in the most imminent danger of being stoned to death by the peasants of a little village in the neighbourhood of Orleans, for the sole crime of heresy[o]. Obedience to the laws and the sovereign, were superseded by the mutual detestation and antipathy of the two religions. When Rapin, a Hugonot gentleman, arrived at Thoulouse in 1568, charged with dispatches from the King, and from the Prince of Condé, announcing the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the Crown and the Protestants; the magistrates and people instantly caused him to be executed without form of justice[p]. In the short interval which elapsed between that treaty and the renewal of war, a period not exceeding six months, more than ten thousand Hugonots were massacred in various parts of France[q]. The Bishop of Nevers, deputed by the Prince of Condé, in 1562, on a mission to the Emperor Ferdinand the First; did not hesitate to assert in his harangue, pronounced before the Diet assembled at Frankfort, that in the space of only four months preceding the assumption of arms, thirty thousand persons professing the reformed religion, were put to death by the populace, thro'out the kingdom.[r]

Oblivion of the laws.

Massacres.

[o] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 134.
[p] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 191. La Noue, p. 699.
[q] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 262.
[r] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 35.

CHAP. III. 1574—1589. Violations of faith.

Even the most profound submission to the laws and magistrates, could not secure protection, nor preserve from violence. In 1572, eight hundred Protestants, who in obedience to the injunction of the Governor of Lyons, had voluntarily allowed themselves to be disarmed and confined, on receiving his assurance of safety; were massacred within an hour afterwards, by the Catholics. At Rouen, a still more enormous violation of faith was committed. More than eighteen hundred Hugonots who had quitted the city, having returned to their houses, upon promise of security given in the King's name, were indiscriminately sacrificed to the implacable animosity of their enemies. These facts were so notorious and so incontestable, that the deputies of Henry, Prince of Condé, who were sent in 1575, to negociate a peace with Henry the Third, soon after his accession, did not hesitate to state them in the most forcible language. Neither the King, nor Catherine of Medicis, attempted to controvert or deny the assertions. They only tried to diminish their enormity, by accusing the Hugonots of similar acts of perfidy or vengeance[s]. In the review of this sanguinary and ferocious period, we are perpetually reminded of the scenes of devastation and slaughter, which have been again performed on the same theatre, by a savage populace, since the Revolution of 1789. But the acts of D'Aumale, of St. Pont, or of Des

[s] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 339—341.

Adrets, however cruel, are lost in the contemplation of the indiscriminate massacres, conflagrations and carnage committed by Le Bon at Arras, by Carrier at Nantes, and above all by Collot d'Herbois at Lyons, between 1793 and 1795. Even the massacre of Paris itself originated in mistaken principles of religious zeal and intolerance; while the murders of the "Septembrizeurs" in 1792, and the "executions en masse" of Robespierre, were deliberate crimes of ferocious calculation, such as only monsters like Caracalla, or Maximin the Thracian, would have enjoined and perpetrated. The French people were alike in both periods, which present the same images to the mind, tho' with aggravated features of horror and disgust, when they are contemplated in an age of refinement. Under the last princes of Valois, it became criminal only to lean towards toleration. The great Chancellor l'Hopital, known to lament the sanguinary maxims of Charles the Ninth, and to deplore the massacre of St. Bartholemew, was instantly marked out for destruction. The guards of Catherine of Medicis could scarcely protect him from being torn in pieces by an enraged and furious multitude, who thirsted for his life, though passed in the exemplary discharge of every public duty, and every domestic virtue[t]. Some years earlier, during the progress made by the court through the southern provinces of France, it had become necessary to give him a

Danger incurred by L'Hopital.

[t] Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. i. Eclaircissements, p. 72 and 73.

guard,

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guard, in order to secure him from outrage, on account of his avowed disinclination to violent measures in matters of religion.[u]

Spirit and mode of thinking, in that century.

When we consider how generally diffused was this intolerant spirit, we may perhaps incline to attribute to its influence, more than to any other cause, the calamities which mark the period. Neither the machinations of Catherine of Medicis, the ferocity of Charles the Ninth, nor the ambition and revenge of the Guises, could have produced the massacre of Paris, if all the materials had not been previously disposed for the purpose. It is more to the age, than to any individuals, however elevated or profligate, that we ought to look, for the explication of that memorable and unparalleled event[x]. To shed the blood of Heretics, was then esteemed meritorious.

Marshal Tavannes.

Marshal Tavannes, who fairly avows in his Memoirs, that he advised the massacre, and who justifies it on principles of necessity and policy, died in the following year, at an advanced period of life. He met the approaches of dissolution, with composure; exhibited marks of unfeigned piety; ordered his sons to restore to the crown, without touching the revenues, an abbey which he possessed; and made confession of all his sins without reserve. But he did not include in the list, his advice to put to the sword two thousand Protestants who had

[u] Brantome, vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 100, 101.
[x] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. Eclaircissements, p. 67—69.

repaired

repaired to Paris, on the faith of the royal protection, because he felt neither remorse, nor condemnation for the act [y]. Such was the spirit and mode of thinking in that century, and the perversion of the human mind on religious concerns. A degree of enthusiasm which suspended and extinguished all the ordinary motives to human action, while it swallowed up even ambition, natural affection, and self-interest, pervaded the minds of men, on religious matters. A thousand proofs of it occur in the writings of the period under our review. The Duke of Nevers says in his Memoirs, that he considered a war against Heretics and Hugonots, as a Crusade to which every man was bound to subscribe his private fortune. He gave the best proof of his sincerity, by lending immense sums to Henry the Third, in order to pay his forces, at various times, when employed to reduce, or to exterminate the Protestants. All his writings, and the tenor of his whole life, evince that the Duke of Nevers was a man of scrupulous honor, unshaken loyalty in an age of universal faction, and of real piety. He was carried away by the persecuting spirit of the time in which he lived. [z]

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Enthusiasm.

The Cardinal of Bourbon, a prelate mild and humane in his own nature, but superstitious and intolerant, declared in a council held at Blois, in February 1577, where Henry the

[y] Tavannes, p. 418—420, and 470.
[z] Memoirs de Nevers, vol. i. p. 170, 171.

Third

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Third was present, that not even a temporary toleration ought on any pretence to be granted to the Hugonots. "I have," said he, "more "interest in the preservation of that body of "men, than any other individual, since my "two nephews are engaged in their quarrel; "but I would myself become their executioner, "if they are Heretics[a]." Montluc, notwithstanding the cruelties which he ordered or perpetrated against the Protestants, was not destitute of principles of devotion towards the Supreme Being, as is evident from all his writings. He regarded himself as no other than an executioner of the divine vengeance, like Moses or Joshua, engaged in a holy vocation, when putting to the sword, persons convicted of heresy. "I have never," says he, "been "in any action, that I have not invoked the "aid of the Deity; and I have not passed a "day in my whole life, without having prayed "to him, and demanded his forgiveness[b]." The prayer which he subjoins, as that petition which from his earliest entrance on a military life, he had been accustomed to offer to God, is such as Marcus Aurelius, or Socrates, might have dictated and approved. The conclusion is equally sublime and resigned: "I ask not "for life; for I desire only that which pleases "thee. Thy will be done: I submit all to thy "divine goodness[c]." It is in these contradic-

Montluc.

His enthusiasm and conviction.

[a] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 172.
[b] Montluc, vol. iv. p. 332. [c] Ibid. p. 332.

tions

tions and inconsistencies, that we see fully depictured the character of the age, where superstition and intolerance were perpetually blended, and whose union was so productive of scenes of destruction. CHAP. III. 1574—1589.

It is notwithstanding, matter of pleasing reflexion to all who desire to contemplate human nature in an amiable or an elevated point of view, to know that even in a time so sanguinary, there were not wanting some enlarged and beneficent spirits, occupied in tempering the rage of religious discord. Every page of the works of L'Hopital, breathes conciliation and forgiveness to his fellow men. He was not satisfied with lamenting and condemning the violent measures of the cabinet of Charles the Ninth: he opposed them with steady, though ineffectual firmness. His epistle to the Cardinal of Lorrain, written in 1562; and the letter addressed by him to Du Ferrièr, the French embassador at Venice, in 1568; are two of the most enlightened and masterly productions of any period. They inculcate universal charity and toleration [d]. It would have been happy for mankind, if maxims so benign had not been obliterated and rejected, in the frenzy of persecution. Examples of liberality and tolerance. L'Hopital.

Castelnau, whose valuable Memoirs terminate with the peace concluded between the Crown and the Protestants in 1570, finishes by thus apostrophizing his son; "Thou mayst judge Castelnau.

[d] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Epitres, p. 176—181, and p. 191—202.

"by

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"by what is here related, that the spiritual "sword, which is the good example of the "clergy, charity, exhortation, and other good "works, are more necessary to extinguish he- "resies, and to bring back into the right path "those who have wandered out of it, than that "which sheds the blood of our neighbours; "more particularly when the disease has at- "tained to such a height, that in proportion "as we attempt to cure it by volent remedies, "we only irritate the disorder[e]. The speech of Paul de Foix, Archbishop of Toulouse, pronounced in the cabinet and council of Henry the Third, on that prince's return from Poland in 1574, strenuously advising measures of lenity and toleration towards the Protestants, is full of the same expanded and comprehensive sentiments. They were enforced by De Thou, First President of the Parliament of Paris, and by Harlay, his successor in that office. But, Henry, equally for his own misfortune, and the calamity of his subjects, was incapable of perceiving their beneficial tendency.[f]

Damville.

Even Marshal Damville, son to the Great Constable Montmorenci, and who subsequently attained, himself, to the same high dignity, though, as we may presume, an unlettered soldier, more inured to the hardships of a military life, than competent to judge of scholastic and theological disputes; yet felt the necessity of

[e] Castel. Memoires, vol. i. p. 266.
[f] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 137—149.

tole-

toleration. Experience and reflexion supplied in him, the want either of natural expansion of mind, or native benevolence of disposition. When the deputies of the states of Languedoc waited on him at Montpelier, in 1577, to acquaint him with their determination of renewing the war against the Protestants; he replied, that "the past calamities sufficiently demonstrated, "how much it belonged to God alone to dis- "pense faith, which cannot be the work of any "earthly power; that he could not enough ex- "press his astonishment, at the resumption of "projects so fatal; and that all mankind must "be convinced of the necessity of permitting "the exercise of the two religions, as the only "means of preserving, or of perpetuating inter- "nal peace."[g]

King of Navarre.

Henry, King of Navarre, exhibited a shining example of toleration, previous, as well as subsequent to his ascending the throne of France. In 1576, after his flight from Paris, and the renunciation which he then made of the Catholic religion; far from attempting to force the consciences of those who adhered to it, he exerted all his endeavours, not without success, to obtain for them the freedom of worship in the city of Rochelle itself, the asylum of the Hugonot faith and doctrines. At his request, a chapel was permitted to be appropriated to the celebration of mass; and his conduct in a point of such importance and delicacy, acquired

[g] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 478 and 479.

him

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him in no small degree, the general esteem and affection[h]. In all his subsequent actions, we trace the same enlargement of mind. The severity on religious concerns, which, if we may believe the testimony of Margaret of Valois his wife, he exercised towards her at Pau, the capital of Bearn, during her residence in that city; seems to have arisen more from private resentment, than from a spirit of persecution[i]. When he over-ran Poitou in 1589, and made himself master of a number of places in the province, he contented himself with restoring to the Protestants, their civil and religious liberty, as granted them by the royal edicts; without attempting to molest, or in any shape to persecute the Catholics[k]. Even though we should attribute wholly to policy, a system so replete with benefit to the state, we diminish little of its intrinsic merit. The prosperity and repose which distinguished the last twelve years of the reign of Henry the Fourth, and which rendered the period one of the happiest in the annals of the French monarchy, were eminently due to the benign influence of the maxims of toleration embraced by that illustrious prince.

Condition and resources of the King of Navarre.

It is requisite for the completion of the national picture before us, to trace with some degree of accuracy, the condition and resources of the King of Navarre, previous to his eleva-

[h] Davila, p. 457. [i] Memoires de Marg. p. 172—174.
[k] De Thou, vol. x. p. 585. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 164.

tion

tion to the throne of France. He may be considered as the most interesting character of the period; and when we reflect, that after having rescued the country from an abyss of calamities, he founded a new race of monarchs; no portion of his life can be matter of indifference, in the general delineation of the age and time. During more than three years immediately following the massacre of Paris, he remained a captive in the court of the two successive kings, his brothers-in-law; deprived of power, watched with jealous circumspection, compelled to profess a religion in which he did not believe, and scarcely exempt from perpetual, as well as imminent danger of his life. It is an incontestable fact, that Charles the Ninth consulted Philip the Second, in 1574, upon the measure of putting to death his own brother Francis, Duke of Alenson, and the King of Navarre[l]. Charles could not better address himself on such a subject, than to a prince justly suspected of having accelerated, a few years preceding, the end of his only son Don Carlos. If Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, had produced a male heir, the resolution was already taken to dispatch her husband[m]. Although he escaped from so many personal dangers, he was reduced to the lowest point of political depression and insignificance. Catherine of Medicis compelled him, from his

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His captivity.

Danger.

State of depression.

[l] Deposition de Coconas, in Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 375, and p. 366.

[m] Deposition du Roi de Nav. in Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 361.

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prison in the Louvre, to issue an edict, prohibiting in all the territories of his obedience, the exercise of any other worship except the Catholic [n]. His subjects, encouraged by the court of France, and no longer controlled by the presence of a master, threw off all subjection or obedience [o]. Insulted, or duped by the Duke of Guise, who abusing his confidence, betrayed him to Henry the Third; he was considered as incapable of producing any disturbance, and he sunk into oblivion [p]. Immersed in pursuits of gallantry natural to his age, which Catherine of Medicis artfully encouraged, in order to reconcile him to his captivity, he excited no apprehension [q]. His emancipation from confinement, became the first moment of his political existence. During above thirteen years which elapsed between his escape from Paris, and the interview of Plessiz les Tours in 1589, he underwent the severest trials of his fortitude and principles. Exiled to the distant province of Gascony; proscribed by the King, his brother-in-law; persecuted by the powerful faction of "the League;" declared by the States General, unworthy to succeed to the crown; excommunicated by the Romish pontiffs; attacked by the armies of Henry the Third; and dishonored, as well as betrayed by his own wife, who proved not only false to his

Exile, and hardships.

[n] Hist. de Marg. de Val. p. 117.

[o] Deposition du Roi de Nav. in Le Lab. vol. ii. p 363.

[p] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 26. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 186 and 187.

[q] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 162.

bed,

bed, but engaged in enterprizes against his dignity and repose; he vanquished these numerous assailants, and sustained the throne which he was destined to ascend, when it appeared on the point of being subverted by a powerful and triumphant faction. CHAP. III. 1574—1589.

The King of Navarre possessed little more of royalty, except the title and external honors. The antient kingdom of that name, extending from the confines of France, south to the banks of the Ebro, of which country Pampeluna was the capital, had long been swallowed up and incorporated with the Spanish monarchy. A small portion of the Lower Navarre, together with the principality of Beärn, situate to the north of the Pyrenees, constituted the whole extent of his contracted dominions. Ferdinand the Catholic, soon after the commencement of the sixteenth century, had usurped and retained the far greater part of the original kingdom of Navarre. The duchy of Albret in Gascony, which he inherited from his great grandfather John d'Albret; and that of Vendome, his patrimonial establishment as a prince of the blood of France; formed no inconsiderable addition to his maternal inheritance. In right of his Queen, Margaret of Valois, he likewise, exercised the supreme authority in the two provinces of the Agenois and the Quercy, situate along the Garonne, in a beautiful portion of the kingdom, which had been ceded to that princess on her marriage, with every royal prerogative[r]. His dominions. Patrimony.

[r] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 375.

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The nominal title of governor of Guienne, which he retained, was wholly destitute of political power or influence, nor would Bourdeaux, the capital, ever admit him to enter within its walls[s]. Limited nevertheless as were the territories of the King of Navarre, his rights of sovereignty remained incontestable and acknowledged. They derived from Catherine de Foix, last princess of that house, expelled by Ferdinand the Catholic. Jane, his mother, did not hesitate in 1569, to cause St. Colombe, Favas, Pordiac, and several other gentlemen taken in arms against her, to be executed as traitors; they being her natural-born subjects, and of course guilty of high treason.[t]

Sovereignty.

Revenues.

The aggregate amount of the King of Navarre's revenues, arising from all the sources above enumerated, must be esteemed very inadequate to the support of his dignity. It appears that in 1573, after the accession made to them by the marriage portion of Margaret, they did not exceed, when the necessary charges were deducted, the clear sum of one hundred and forty thousand Livres, or, about six thousand pounds Sterling; while the annual expence of his household and establishment rose to double the sum[u]. In the preceding year, when he arrived at Paris previous to his nuptials, he was accompanied by eight hundred noblemen and gentlemen, all clad in mourning for Jane,

[s] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 436 and 437.
[t] Memoires de Cast. vol. i. p. 250.
[u] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 775.

Queen

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Pecuniary distress.

Queen of Navarre[x]. His pecuniary difficulties were in fact such, as to render it impossible for him either to maintain the decent splendor of his court, or to reward the services of his followers and servants. He supplied however the deficiency in a great degree, by the affability, frankness, and amenity of his manners. When the Duke of Epernon was sent by Henry the Third in 1584, for the purpose of exhorting him to a change of religion; the favorite far exceeded the King of Navarre, in the pomp of his retinue, and the grandeur of his attendants[y]. "The whole court of Nerac could not have "furnished forty thousand Livres," says Sul-"ly, in 1586, at my arrival[z]." In his way thither, he declares that he supped with the Prince of Condé, at St. John d'Angely, who was served in wooden platters[a]. His illustrious descendant who has taken refuge among us, in whom survives the courage and the constancy of his great ancestors; may therefore reflect with some satisfaction, that even in England, after the expulsion of the house of Bourbon from the French throne, he is not reduced to extremities as great, as those which were endured by Henry, Prince of Condé, while still resident in France, and with no remote prospect of succeeding to the crown. It appears, that the largest pecuniary appointments given to any person in the court of Navarre, were

[x] Memoires de Margue, p. 29. [y] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 88.
[z] About seventeen hundred pounds. Sully, vol. i. p. 45.
[a] Ibid. p. 44.

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those enjoyed by Sully, in his double capacity of counsellor of state, and chamberlain. They amounted together, only to the annual sum of two thousand Livres, or about ninety pounds sterling. [b]

Military force.

A sovereign so limited in his revenues, could maintain a very slender military force. He may be said indeed, not to have had any regular troops ranged under the standard, and only to have composed a hasty assemblage of ill-disciplined vassals or retainers, when pressed by the exigency of his affairs. His weakness was such, that in 1577, during the war which he maintained against Henry the Third, he found himself incapable of forming any army; and he was repulsed before the inconsiderable town of Marmande in Guienne, with loss and disgrace, tho' he was present in person, at the head of all the cavalry and infantry in his power to assemble. Such was his deficiency in every article requisite for a campaign, or for a siege, that his whole field equipage consisted in one large cannon, and two small pieces of artillery [c]. In the ensuing rupture of 1580, he betrayed still more evident marks of his inability to maintain a contest of duration, against the crown of France. Destitute of money and of troops, he was reduced to fly before Biron, who commanded the royal forces. The King of Navarre, shut up in the town of Nerac, with only about four hundred horse-

Slender resources.

[b] Memoires de Sully, vol. i. p. 414.
[c] Sully, vol. i. p. 16, and p. 18. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 191.

men, of whom the far greater number were in the service of the Count de la Rochefoucault; beheld the enemy advance up to the gates, and take post with four thousand foot, and six hundred cavalry, in the vineyards adjoining the city. He might no doubt have been compelled to surrender at discretion, and have been afterwards carried prisoner to Paris. But Biron did not think proper to pursue his advantages; nor is it probable that at any period of his reign, Henry the Third could have desired or approved the entire destruction of the first prince of the blood.[d]

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Inability to resist the royal army.

The largest body of forces which the King of Navarre seems ever to have commanded, before his accession to the crown of France, was at Coutras, in 1587, where they amounted to four thousand foot, and two thousand five hundred horse: but he was only the general of these troops; and far from being able to retain them after his victory, they immediately disbanded, or followed their respective leaders[e]. At the accommodation which took place between him and his brother-in-law, Henry the Third, concluded at Tours in 1589, it was stipulated that he should maintain at his own expence, two thousand infantry, and twelve hundred cavalry, to act against "the League[f]." Epernon conducted a much more considerable force, levied and armed by himself, to the assistance of his master[g]. We

His numbers at Coutras.

[d] Memoires, d'Aub. Remarques, p. 214. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 226.
[e] De Thou, vol. x. p. 19. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 322.
[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 590.
[g] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 292.

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know however with certainty, from the testimony of Du Plessis Mornay, who negotiated the treaty between the two sovereigns, that the King of Navarre was then at the head of five thousand infantry; besides five hundred gentlemen, and as many more Harquebussiers, well mounted, in the finest condition. Mornay even engaged, if orders for the purpose were issued by Henry the Third, that this body of troops should be doubled in less than two months. But the Hugonot party, of which the King of Navarre was only the chief, furnished the resources for levying, and maintaining them when in the field. He was wholly unable, from his own revenues or dominions, to support so heavy a charge.[h]

Court of Navarre.

Notwithstanding the poverty and distresses of the King of Navarre, his court was crouded, gay, and voluptuous. It was sometimes held at the castle of Pau, on the river Gave, in the principality of Beärn; but more frequently at Nerac, the capital of the Duchy of Albret. At every period, but particularly when Margaret, Queen of Navarre, was there present, gallantry, diversions, and festivities of every kind, rendered it in some measure magnificent. The picture which she draws of it in 1579 and 1580, is lively, as well as coloured with animation. "We passed," says she, "the "greater part of our time at Nerac, where "the court was so brilliant, that we did "not envy that of France." — "There was

[h] Vie de Du Plessis Mornay. A Leide, 1647, p. 129.

"not

" not any thing to regret, except that the greater part of the nobility and gentlemen were Hugonots: but, of the difference of religious sentiment, no mention was made; the King my husband, and his sister, going to their devotions, while I and my train went to hear Mass, in a chapel, in the park. When the service was ended, we assembled again in a garden, embellished with avenues of laurels and cypress, that bordered the river. In the afternoon and evening, a ball was performed." She owns, that, far from imposing any restraint on the irregularities of the King of Navarre, she on the contrary aided, facilitated, and concealed his amours.[i]

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Margaret of Valois.

Abandoned to the most shameful excesses, and relying for impunity, on her descent from the royal blood of France, Margaret narrowly escaped expiating her infidelities, by an ignominious death. Despised by her brother Henry the Third, and become odious to her husband; after having been driven with ignominy and disgrace from the court of Paris, she only owed her life to the clemency and humanity of the King of Navarre[k]. He himself, attached at that time to the Countess of Guiche, was disposed to have made every sacrifice to his passion, and even to have legitimated his connexion with her by marriage, if he had not been pre-

[i] Hist. de Marg. p. 323. Memoires de Marg. p. 176, 177.

[k] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 105. Letters du Roi de Nav. in the Œuvres de Voltaire, vol. x. p. 236 and 237.

vented

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vented by the firm and generous exhortations of D'Aubigné[l]. The rough, but, salutary remonstrances of Sully, at a subsequent period of his life, proved alike effectual, when he seemed ready to give his hand to Gabrielle D'Estrees.

Numbers of his adherents.

Even in the most depressed state of his fortune, the courage, affability, and frankness of character which distinguished the King of Navarre, acquired him numerous followers. In 1576, during an interview which took place between him and the Queen-mother, in the town of Thouars in Poitou, he seduced into his service, thirty-two gentlemen of the French court[m]. At Pau, and at Nerac, he was constantly surrounded by Catholic, as well as by Hugonot nobles; but such was the animosity which subsisted between them, that they seemed more than once to be on the point of cutting each other in pieces. The King was accustomed to say, that his obligations to the adherence of the Catholics, were much greater than those he owed to the Protestants; as the former served him upon principles more disinterested, and in contradiction to their religious opinions or prejudices.[n]

Reasons for his refusal to abjure the reformed religion.

It may excite some degree of surprize, that continually importuned as he was by Henry the Third, to resume the profession of the Romish faith; and tempted by the almost certain reversion of the greatest crown in Europe, after the death of the Duke of Anjou; he should yet have pertinaciously declined to adopt the mea-

[l] Memoires D'Aub. p. 123—129.
[m] Ibid. p. 52.
[n] Sully, vol. i. p. 17.

sure.

sure. We must attribute his conduct, partly to conviction and principle, partly to policy or prudence. The feeble and vacillating character of the French King, on which no reliance could be placed; the insidious enmity of Catherine of Medicis; together with the dishonor as well as danger, attached to such a step, deterred him, and delayed its consummation. But he felt its necessity, if he ever attained to the throne of France; and though he refused, after a long struggle and much irresolution, to comply with Epernon's solicitations in 1584; yet on that, and on every other occasion, he professed his readiness to receive instruction on the point, thus preparing the minds of the nation for his final conversion. It may indeed be fairly asserted, that whatever virtues or endowments he possessed, he never could have been peaceably and generally recognized for sovereign of France, if he had not assumed the religion of the people, over whom he was called to reign by Providence. [o]

[o] Lettre de du Fresne, in the Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 77—175.

CHAP. IV.

State of literature, the sciences, and the fine arts. — Natural philosophy. — Astronomy. — Pharmacy. — Jurisprudence. — Eloquence. — History. — Poetry. — Polite letters. — Erudition of the age. — Imitation of the antients. — Protection of learning, and learned men. — Progress of the art of printing. — Libels. — Libraries. — State of the Drama. — Passion for Romances. — Mode, and seminaries of education.

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THE grandeur of states and sovereigns is not determined solely by their extent of dominions, by the magnitude of their fleets and armies, or even by the general riches and felicity of the people. In order to be entitled to the appellation of Great, it is necessary not only that the arts and sciences should be held in honor, but that polite letters should be universally cultivated and diffused thro'out the nation. It constitutes the acknowledged privilege of genius, to immortalize not only its possessors, but even its protectors. The princes of Medicis, though they were in fact only the first merchants of Italy, and the first citizens of a small Republic situated among the Appennines, have acquired a reputation far superior to that of the most powerful monarchs, their contemporaries. Francis the First, who emulated their fame, and who followed their traces, diffused the lustre of his name over Europe

Glory, annexed to the protection of letters.

Protection, extended to them by Francis the First,

Europe, more by the protection and cultivation of letters, than by his victories, or military atchievements. His exertions to awaken the dormant talents of his subjects, proved not ineffectual: in the course of a reign of more than thirty years, he had the satisfaction to behold the commencement of that light, which gradually spreading and augmenting, attained to its meridian in the following century, under Louis the Fourteenth. His son Henry the Second, however inferior to Francis in the love of arts and sciences, nevertheless extended his munificence to their professors [a]. Even Charles the Ninth, during the short intervals of civil war and massacre, unbent himself by the softer occupations of poetry and music; in the former of which arts, like his grandfather Francis the First, he did not disdain to compose [b]. He was accustomed to hold an academy, twice every week, in his own cabinet, at which men of letters and ladies assisted, where questions of a literary nature were agitated and discussed [c]. It is clear, by the expressions which D'Aubigné uses, who relates the fact, that Hugonots were not excluded from this society. Charles may be regarded as a singular instance in the history of mankind, of a prince whose ferocity was not humanized by the study of letters. His brother and successor, Henry the Third, immersed in pleasures, or engaged in hypocritical exercises of devotion, found

and by his successors.

[a] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 55, and p. 59.
[b] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 64.
[c] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 184.

little

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little leisure for the elegant researches of taste and science: he was notwithstanding, equally liberal in his donations to those individuals, who were distinguished by their talents in every branch of art; and Desportes the poet held the same rank in his affection, which Ronsard had enjoyed in the favor of his predecessor. [a]

State of science.

When we consider the state of the sciences, at the period of which we are treating, we must be compelled to admit that they were still only in their infancy. Scarcely any thing was taught in the schools, except Dialectics, and the Aristotelian philosophy. Such was the profound homage felt for the writings of the Stagyrite, that

Ramus.

Ramus, who perished at the massacre of Paris, was dragged through the streets, and his body afterwards thrown into the Seine, by the students who followed the doctrines of Aristotle, which Ramus had combated and endeavoured to expose to ridicule. As early as 1543, under the reign of Francis the First, this great question agitated not only Paris, but, the whole kingdom. Ramus having with a boldness and strength of mind which excites admiration, when we consider the idolatry then paid to the name of Aristotle, openly undertaken to overturn the principles of the father of the Peripatetic school; maintained his opinions with great ability, both by his pen, and in disputes publicly held in the metropolis. It is a fact which strongly demonstrates the importance then annexed to literary objects of discussion or enquiry, that Francis the

[a] L'Etoile, p. 88.

First

First considered this scholastic controversy, as a matter deserving his royal interposition. Treating it like an affair of state, or of juridical decision, he named arbitrators to hear and give sentence on the point. Ramus, condemned by the tribunal, was declared guilty of "temerity and insolence" in his Theses, or Animadversions upon Aristotle. An edict, or "Arret," issued by Francis himself, proscribed the works of Ramus, and prohibited him from teaching his philosophical doctrines, or disseminating his tenets. Anaxagoras in antiquity had been treated with even greater severity. It must be confessed, that in so singular an interposition of his authority, the King of France acted rather as the Dictator or Despot, "than as the "father and restorer of polite letters;" titles which he emulated with the utmost anxiety, and which his contemporaries bestowed on him. James the First, in his Anathema against the use of tobacco, could not have manifested more prejudice. But Francis, tho' a prince of superior endowments, was borne away by the prevailing spirit of the times. Ramus, who soon afterwards embraced the Calvinistic doctrines, of which change in his opinions he appears to have made an imprudent exhibition, yet fell a victim rather to scholastic rancor, than to theological persecution. At the advanced age of sixty-nine, the furious disciples of the Aristotelian school, enflamed by their professors, treated his remains with the same brutal and disgusting indignities, which were so com-

Tribunal instituted to try his works.

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commonly exhibited at Paris, during the first years of the French Revolution. The works of Ramus, on Dialectics, grammar, and geometry, however much admired in the sixteenth century, are now almost forgotten.[e]

Philosophy.

Natural philosophy, founded on experiments, was in a great measure still unknown under the last princes of the house of Valois, and even astronomy had not advanced beyond its first rudiments. Copernicus had indeed, from an obscure and remote city of Polish Prussia, situate on the banks of the Vistula, disclosed the system which bears his name; when he acquainted the world with the true position and revolutions of the celestial bodies, towards the close of the reign of Francis the First. But, that great truth, combated by the superstitious prejudices of the times, made its way slowly and progressively through the European nations. France does not seem to have possessed any astronomer of eminence, before the decease of Henry the Third; while both in Germany and in Italy, far greater discoveries had been made in the sister sciences of astronomy and philosophy. True chemistry seemed equally neglected; while astrologers and alchemists, availing themselves of the ignorance or credulity of princes, filled every court, and were held in universal estimation. Henry the Third, without either information or examination, but, from blind deference to the Holy See, caused the Gregorian Calendar and computa-

Astronomy.

Reception of the Gregorian calendar in France.

[e] Biograph. Diction. vol. xi. p. 28. Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 55 and 56.

tion

tion of time, to be received among the French. It was in some measure surreptitiously registered by the Parliament of Paris, in the absence of the President Harlay. Science could claim therefore no share whatever in its adoption, which took place immediately after its promulgation at Rome by Gregory the Thirteenth, on the 10th of December, 1582. That day was counted for the twentieth of the month[f]. Similar motives of obedience to the court of Rome, without any mixture of astronomical calculation, induced the Duke of Anjou, then acknowledged as sovereign of the Low Countries, to effect its introduction among the Flemings[g]. Before the year 1563, the French were accustomed to reckon from Easter day, as constituting the beginning of the year. The famous Chancellor L'Hopital caused the day to be altered to the first of January, but the Parliament did not register the edict till 1564.[h]

Pharmacy.

It may be justly questioned, whether pharmacy and surgery had attained to a much higher point of perfection, than the sciences already enumerated. Anatomy was very imperfectly known or studied: scarcely had the prejudices been overcome, which oppose themselves to the dissection of the human body. Emetics were never administered; and some of the most powerful medicines, now commonly used in the cure

Anatomy.

[f] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 662. Lettres de Paul de Foix, p. 611, and p. 616.

[g] De Thou, vo viii. p. 662 and 663.

[h] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 119.

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of diseases, were then undiscovered. The Peruvian bark, the great or only specific in intermitting fevers, but which had not yet been imported from the New World, lay concealed among the forests and mountains of South America. Even the circulation of the blood was only surmised, and by no means ascertained. Yet the age produced some illustrious names, who drew from their contemporaries the most extravagant encomiums. Fernel, physician to Francis the First, was regarded as a man of consummate skill: but he belongs to the age preceding the period under our review, having been born under Charles the Eighth, before the conclusion of the fifteenth century; and having expired in 1558, about a year anterior to the death of Henry the Second. He was a native of Picardy, and received a pension of two thousand five hundred crowns, for having, as was supposed, rendered Catherine of Medicis, then Dauphiness, capable of producing children. Her sterility during ten years subsequent to her marriage in 1533, had given rise to reports of an intention to repudiate that princess, who was no longer sustained by the credit of her relation Pope Clement the Seventh[i]. The practice of immoderate bleeding in almost all cases, which long continued to characterize the French pharmacy, and which Le Sage has so admirably ridiculed in the person of "Sangrado," was discountenanced by Fernel. His works, composed in

Physicians. Fernel.

[i] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 284. Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 55.

Latin,

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Latin, and limited to professional subjects of scientific discussion or examination, were universally read: but his medical reputation became eclipsed by the fame of Ambrose Paré, a Hugonot, whose talents exempted him from the massacre of Paris, by the personal interposition of Charles the Ninth[k]. Paré survived the family of Valois, and died in an advanced age, soon after the accession of Henry the Fourth. With him the science of pharmacy, and the practice of surgery, may both be said to have arisen among the French, from whom they were gradually diffused over the northern nations. His works, which appeared towards the conclusion of the reign of Henry the Third, and which were dedicated to that prince, bear testimony to the acuteness of his talents, the superiority of his views, and the indefatigable attention paid by him, to ameliorate the mode of treating the objects of his care. In defiance of vulgar prejudices, and the remonstrances of his countrymen, who were desirous of concealing from the world, the mysteries of the medical profession; Paré addressed his writings to mankind, not as his predecessors had been accustomed, under the veil of a learned language, but in his native tongue.[l]

Surgeons. Paré.

Before the year 1536, when he commenced his practice, as one of the surgeons attending on the army of Francis the First, then serving in Piedmont; so ignorant were all the prac-

State of surgery.

[k] Brantome, vol iii. Cap. Fran. p. 166.

[l] Œuvres d'Ambroise Pare, a Lyon, 1652, au Lecteur, p. 4, 5.

CHAP. IV. 1574—1589. and practice.

titioners in that important branch of art, that the first elements of it were unknown. We can scarcely believe, that the preparation and ingredients of gunpowder were considered as poisonous; and that it was universally customary, in order to deterge and cleanse the wounds caused by fire-arms, to apply to them boiling oil[m]. John de Vigo, a celebrated physician, whose writings and opinions were received as oracular and infallible, had recommended this pernicious application, previous to every other dressing or digestive. Paré ingenuously confesses, that, subdued and awed by so high an authority, he pursued the practice; and it was only from the failure of a supply of oil in the camp, that he was compelled to substitute a less destructive application. "Yet, terrified," says he, "at my own boldness in thus venturing to deviate from the received mode of practice; and apprehensive that I should find the patients, whose wounds I had not cauterized by the use of boiling oil, dead of poison; I was unable to sleep, and I rose from my bed, at an early hour, to visit them. But, beyond my hopes, I found those, to whom from necessity I had administered a digestive of a milder nature, composed of the yolk of eggs, oil of roses, and turpentine, free from pain, inflammation, or tumours, having reposed well during the night. On the contrary, the persons whose wounds had been washed with hot oil, were in a state

[m] Œuvres de Paré, au Lecteur, p. 265—267.

"of

"of fever, with violent symptoms of every "kind. From that time, I resolved never more "to burn thus cruelly the poor wretches, af- "flicted with gun-shot wounds." [n]

Alterations adopted.

It was therefore in this instance, as in almost all the other discoveries of art, only accident which first led the way to so beneficial an alteration in the practice of surgery. We may easily conceive, how prodigious must have been the mortality in camps and armies, under the antient system. Every page of Paré's works bears testimony of the fact. To his laborious researches, and unwearied exertions, was likewise due the introduction and improvement of almost all the principal instruments, still used in surgery. Those necessary for performing the operation of the trepan, were greatly perfected by him [o]; and the accumulated honors, presents, or emoluments, conferred on him not only by the French kings, but by foreign princes and nobles, prove the high admiration entertained for his talents, all over Europe.

Cures performed.

One of the most famous cures performed in surgery, during the period under our consideration, was that of Francis, Duke of Guise, wounded at the siege of Boulogne, under the reign of Henry the Second. The stump of a lance which entered between his nose and his eye, was extracted by Nicholas Lavernan, with so much delicacy and success, as neither to impair his sight in the smallest degree, nor to

[n] Œuvres de Paré, p. 263, 264, and p. 782, 783. [o] Ibid. p. 787.

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leave any unpleasing scar. So deeply was the weapon fixed in the Duke's head, that in order to draw it out, Lavernan was obliged to lay his foot upon the head of the patient, and to exert his utmost force[p]. The operation was esteemed a master-piece of art and skill. We may judge how little the use of styptics was known as late as 1582, by the instance of William the First, Prince of Orange. After the severe wound that he received at Antwerp, from the pistol ball of Jaureguy, which passed through both his cheeks, hot irons were immediately applied to cauterize the parts. That expedient appeared at first to succeed; but on the tenth day, the crust which had formed, fell: the bleeding recommenced, and with so much violence, that no means could be discovered of stopping it, or of closing the vessels. In so critical an emergency, Leonard Botal, an Italian of Asti in Piedmont, physician to the Duke of Anjou, advised as the only means left, to stop the wound by the application of the thumb, and to employ men who should incessantly relieve each other, for the purpose. The advice was followed, and contributed to save the Prince's life.[q] Tavannes loudly arraigns and condemns the practice of surgery, as it existed in his time. He asserts, that it was customary to open all gunshot, or other wounds, with such indiscretion, as to produce imposthumes or discharges, more

Styptics.

[p] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 121. Œuvres de Paré, p. 785.

[q] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 614.

fatal to the patient than the original wound itself. It would seem that few persons recovered, or received a perfect cure. "The lancet," says he, "is more destructive than the ball." [r]

Study of jurisprudence.

Notwithstanding the venality and corruption which polluted the courts of law, the study of jurisprudence was held in the highest honor, the profession of a civilian being equally productive of respect and profit.

Cujas.

Cujas, a native of Toulouse, who attained a vast reputation for his proficiency in the civil law, under the last princes of Valois, was esteemed an oracle of knowledge; and he received from his own sovereign, as well as from strangers, the most flattering marks of respect and consideration [s]. His extraction was low, but the brilliancy, solidity, and universality of his endowments, raised him to the summit of literary reputation thro'-out Europe. They embraced history, as well as polite letters, no less than the civil and canon law. The greatest magistrates of France during the period in which he flourished, had been his pupils; and foreigners who visited the kingdom, were attracted by his fame, to pay their respects to Cujas. He appears to have resided successively at Toulouse, Bourges, and even at Turin; induced probably to prefer the last-mentioned city, by the patronage of Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. In the evening of life, satiated with professional honors, he retired to the banks of the Garonne, where he died at

His celebrity.

[r] Tavannes, p. 66 and 67. [s] Papire Masson. in vita Cujas.

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Bourdeaux; having, like Ambrose Paré, seen the extinction of the house of Valois, and the commencement of the Bourbon line. It is asserted that he accustomed himself to the singular habit of prosecuting his studies, stretched out on a carpet prostrate on his breast, with his books scattered on the floor round him. His works, which were very voluminous, are still regarded as the oracles of French jurisprudence.

Oratory of the bar.

Of the oratory of the bar, we have few specimens remaining: but, from the description given us by L'Hopital, of the celebrated pleading which took place before the parliament of Paris, under Henry the Second, in 1550, when the case of the Protestants, massacred at Merindole and Cabrieres in Dauphiné, was solemnly argued; we may infer that it had attained to a high degree of force, energy, and sublimity[t]. That the profession of a lawyer, employed in civil and criminal causes, must have been a very lucrative employment, is equally apparent. Fees seem to have been nearly as ample, if the relative value of money be considered, as in the present age; but they appear to have been given, rather as the recompence of successful eloquence and exertion, than to have been paid in every event of a suit. Under Henry the Second, we find a sum equal almost to two pounds Sterling, offered by a rich client to his counsel, who had gained a cause of slender pecuniary consequence, after a short pleading of less than two hours. The

Fees.

[t] Trad de l'Hopital, vol. i. Epitres, p. 29—31.

money

money was refused and returned, as inadequate to the trouble and merit, not without expressions of resentment at so insufficient a reward. [u]

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Eloquence had not divested itself in the sixteenth century, of pedantry, affectation, and the false ornaments of a corrupt or unformed taste. This style of oratory and declamation was long retained, and slowly abandoned. It forms notwithstanding, matter of curious remark, that in the two harangues of Henry the Third to the States General, pronounced in 1577, and in 1588; the purity of diction, simplicity, and strength of the composition, might vie with those of almost any period. The latter speech is long, pathetic, and dignified; disgraced by no unnatural allusions or conceits; but, containing a clear exposition of the calamities of the kingdom, finally exhorting or pointing out the obvious, and necessary remedies. It might have been spoken by Pericles, when addressing the Athenian people; by Augustus, in the Roman senate; or by Louis the Fourteenth, at any period of his reign [x]. But, when we peruse the speeches of Montholon, keeper of the seals, and of Renaud de Beaune, Archbishop of Bourges, made in the same assembly, we find ourselves transported to another century. Scripture and Mythology, profane and sacred history, fable and romance, all are ransacked for matter. The names of Joshua, Solomon, and Asa, are min-

Eloquence.

Style of Henry the Third's harangue.

Speeches of Montholon, and Bourges.

[u] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 88 and 89.

[x] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 448—451; and vol. x. p. 373—383.

gled

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gled with Druids, and princes of the Merovingian or Carlovingian Dynasties[y]. The Archbishop of Bourges compares the King, at the opening of his speech, to Nestor in wisdom, and to Ulysses in eloquence. After a compliment to the Queen-mother, whom he denominates another Irené, he exhorts Henry to emulate the example and heroic actions of Hercules and Theseus; of Moses, Joshua, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, David, Manasses, Augustus, Vespasian, and Mithridates. He proceeds to draw a parallel between Solomon and the French monarch; concluding by a fervent wish, that he might exceed in longevity Argantho-nius, King of Gibraltar.[z]

Harangue of Bellievre to Elizabeth.

If we would wish to form a perfect idea of the species of eloquence then used by statesmen and ministers, we have only to peruse the harangue of Bellievre, the French embassador, pronounced in 1587 to Elizabeth, Queen of England. The motive of his address was ostensibly to deprecate and prevent the execution of the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots. Bellievre, in order to prove that sovereigns are not amenable to any earthly tribunal, cites a hymn of Callimachus, who says, that Jupiter alone can judge kings. Having remarked from Plato, that the nature of ordinary men is composed of iron and lead, while that of princes is formed of gold; he proves by citations from Homer and Virgil, as well as by the example of Xeno-

[y] De Thou, vol. x. p. 383—389. [z] Ibid. p. 389—391.

crates,

crates, how sacred the rights of hospitality have been ever esteemed among men. He reminds her of Alexander's treatment of the Thebans taken in the Persian camp, and of Totila's conduct towards Antistia, the wife of Boëthius. Having compared the Scottish Queen to Conradin, beheaded by Charles of Anjou, King of Naples, and to Saul, when in the power of David; he next talks of Regulus, and of Ælius Verus. But, above all he implores her to imitate the Empress Livia, in her advice given to Augustus, respecting the conspiracy of Cinna and Pompey [a]. Elizabeth, who wanted neither reasons nor precedents for a measure on which she had long determined, heard the embassador patiently; opposed to the authorities and examples which he had so laboriously quoted, others favorable to her own intentions; and struck off the head of her prisoner. [b]

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No great nor eminent historian arose in France, during the period under our review. Comines, the most simple, interesting, and accurate narrator of the events of his own time, which he witnessed and related, belongs to the preceding age; and neither De Thou nor Davila had yet appeared; if indeed the latter can, with strict propriety, be regarded as a French writer. Henry the Second, at the solicitation of the Cardinal of Lorrain, had named a Historiographer; annexed to the title, a salary of about sixty pounds Sterling; and even furnished ma-

History.

[a] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 627—637.

[b] Ibid. p. 637.

terials

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terials for the history of his own reign and actions: but no progress was made in the work [c]. We cannot sufficiently regret that the Memoirs composed by Coligni, upon the contemporary events in which he performed so great a part, and in particular, upon the civil wars, do not exist. The manuscript, found after the admiral's death, was brought to Charles the Ninth, as Brantome assures us, and burnt by advice of Marshal Retz [d].

Montluc.

Montluc is only a plain, unlettered soldier, who commemorates his own professional life, under the name of "Commentaries." Yet they contain a number of curious, interesting facts, highly characteristic of the age, comprehending the greater portion of the sixteenth century, from the early part of the reign of Francis the First in 1517, down to Henry the Third in 1577. Montluc is an egotist, continually occupied with himself, and panegyrizing his personal exploits; but without the delicacy and charm which renders Montaigne always agreeable, even when narrating his own actions and praises. It is a fact of the most singular kind, which has not many precedents in the history of man, that Montluc began and composed his "Commentaries," at the advanced age of seventy-five; writing only from memory, without the aid of any notes or documents. A circumstance still more extraordinary, and probably unique, is that he undertook and executed this work, wearing con-

Character of his work,

[c] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 52—55.
[d] Ibid. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 197 and 198.

stantly

stantly a mask over his face. He was reduced to the melancholy necessity of concealing his features and countenance from the view of his fellow creatures, by the terrible effects of a Harquebuss, which may be said to have torn his face in pieces, tho' his sight remained unimpaired. His advanced age at the time of receiving the wound, which exceeded seventy, did not diminish the energy of his mind, and he was created at seventy-four, a Marshal of France. His ferocity, bigotry, and steady loyalty, qualities conspicuous thro'out every page of his "Commentaries," render them one of the most eccentric productions of that age. He was justly regarded as the scourge and executioner of the Hugonots. [e]

CHAP. IV. 1574—1589. and of himself.

The "political and military Discourses" of La Noue, breathe the candor, veracity, and sound reflection, by which thro'out every part of his life, their author was distinguished; but they cannot aspire to the title or praise of history. Unlike to Montluc, La Noue rarely mentions himself, and always with modesty. Simple in his style, and succinct in his narration, he is deficient in the entertainment which Montluc furnishes by his more minute or diffuse account of events. Like our own illustrious and unfortunate countryman Sir Walter Raleigh, "who "with his prison hours enriched the world," La Noue composed his "Discourses," while detained in prison by Philip the Second; as Raleigh wrote his history, while he was con-

La Noue.

His "Discourses,"

[e] Comms. de Montluc, passim.

fined

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fined in the tower of London, by James the First. But, more fortunate than the English hero, La Noue, at the termination of his captivity, was not led out to die on the scaffold. Tho' a Hugonot by religious profession, La Noue was not a bigot; and tho' serving in the armies of the Calvinists, under Louis, Prince of Condé, he was animated by the most ardent affection for his sovereign and his country. Unfortunate in the field, notwithstanding his unquestionable military talents and experience, he lost his left arm before a town in Poitou; but he supplied its place with an iron arm, which enabled him to hold the bridle of his horse. After passing five years, as a prisoner in the Netherlands, he perished by a musket ball, in 1591, at the siege of Lamballe in Brittany, where he commanded the forces of Henry the Fourth. His virtues, disinterestedness, and philosophic equanimity of mind, sustained by exemplary probity, endeared him equally to the Catholics and the Hugonots, who deplored his loss, and embalmed his memory to future times.[f]

services and death.

Tavannes's "Memoirs," tho' totally deficient in composition, and often tedious or destitute of entertainment, yet contain much valuable and secret information on the events which he witnessed, and many of which he directed or advised in person. But, it is to be lamented, that his son, William de Tavannes, who gave them to the world, has mutilated, altered, and defaced them in numerous particulars. Marshal Tavannes, like

Tavannes.

His "Memoirs."

[f] Discourses de La Noue, passim.

Montluc,

Montluc, had performed a conspicuous part in all the wars of Francis the First, Henry the Second, and Charles the Ninth. His writings want the originality of Montluc's "Commentaries," but respire a similar spirit of persecution, violence, and detestation of the Hugonots. In the massacre of St. Bartholomew, Tavannes displayed a sanguinary character, becoming the atrocious spirit of that court and period.[g] CHAP. IV. 1574—1589.

The "Memoirs" of Castelnau are entitled to the highest credit, their author having been the depositary of secrets the most important, under the last Princes of the house of Valois, by whom he was sent embassador five times from France, to Elizabeth, Queen of England. But, unfortunately, the work embraces only the space of eleven years, from Henry the Second's death in 1559, down to 1570. Yet he may be esteemed the finest writer of the four: impartial, without passion, clear, and perfectly well informed upon all the points which he relates or discusses, in the course of his work. He is notwithstanding, inferior in every point of view to his illustrious model, Philip de Comines.[h] Castelnau.

We ought not to omit in this list, the name of Francis de Scepeaux, Marshal de Vieilleville, the contemporary of Montluc and of Tavannes in the field, and like them, a candidate for historic reputation. His "Memoirs" include about forty-three years, from 1528, to 1571, in which last year he died at his castle of Duretal, in the Vieilleville.

[g] Mem. de Tavannes, passim. [h] Mem. de Castelnau, passim.

pro-

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province of Anjou. A circumstance strongly characteristic of the atrocious character of the age, is that he fell a victim to poison, of which he expired in the short space of twelve hours; while Charles the Ninth, his mother Catherine of Medicis, and all the court of France, were resident at Duretal, for the purpose of enjoying the diversion of the chace. Vieilleville's opposition to the violent counsels, which in the following year gave birth to the massacre of Paris, was supposed to have produced this catastrophe, and to have caused his death. Tho' his "Memoirs" are not written in the first person, and appear to have been composed from original papers or documents, by Carloix, secretary to the Marshal, yet they carry all the indelible proofs of authenticity. We find thro'out the whole work, innumerable anecdotes of the most interesting kind; secret adventures of the courts of Francis the First, and Henry the Second; the expiring words, and last admonitions or orders of both those sovereigns previous to their decease; finally, numerous particulars which elucidate the history of their respective reigns. Villeville, nevertheless, from the want of that originality which characterizes all productions, where the author speaks or writes in his own person, is less known than Montluc. His severe probity, loyalty, and superiority to religious bigotry, entitle him to implicit confidence in his narration of facts. [i]

1574—1589. His death.

Character of his work.

[i] Mem. de Vieilleville, passim.

The

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The French language not having attained either to elegance or purity, before the accession of Henry the Second, men of taste and genius disdained to employ it as the vehicle of their compositions. Latin was commonly used by the poets, who found their own language too rough and unharmonious, for the fetters of verse. The finest productions of that kind which appeared before the middle of the sixteenth century, were written in Latin. Marot, who eclipsed the fame of all his predecessors, first quitted the language of Horace, to adopt that of his own country[k]. The names and works of St. Gelais, Jodelle, Belleau, Dorat, and Desportes, who formed the admiration of the court, under Francis the First and his descendants, are now in a great measure forgotten; or are only remembered by some happy lines, which have escaped the general oblivion. In all their writings, a redundancy of learning, and a servile imitation of the antients, is visible. Charmed with the great models of Greece and Rome, they dressed themselves in those borrowed ornaments, without reflecting that the grace and delicacy of the original, could not be transfused, or preserved in the copy.

Poetry.

Preference given to the Latin language.

Marot may be regarded as the father and creator of the French verse. He is the *Chaucer* of France, though he flourished near a century and a half later than the English poet. To Marot is due the invention of the Sonnet,

Marot.

[k] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 412—414. Vie de Ronsard, par Binet, Paris, 1604, p. 128, and p. 175.

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the Rondeau, and the Madrigal, all which were unknown among his countrymen, before the sixteenth century[l]. He flourished during the reign of Francis the First, by whom he was caressed, protected, and rewarded; but his religious opinions, which were supposed to be tinctured with heresy, compelled him to quit the kingdom, and to seek an asylum at Geneva. He died in a species of exile, at Turin in Piedmont, which city was then occupied by the French forces. This event took place in 1544[m], near three years before the decease of Francis. Such was the elegance and beauty of his versification in his native language, that none of the poets, if we except Ronsard, who formed the "Pleiad," or constellation of poetic genius, under the last princes of Valois, could equal him in those endowments[n]. La Fontaine, in the ensuing century, confessed his admiration for, and his obligations to Marot, as one of his masters and models[o]. The indecencies to be found in his compositions, are, like those of Shakespeare among us, in a great degree to be charged to the taste, or manners of the period in which he lived; and may derive some apology, if not justification, from reflecting that scarcely any of the greatest Roman poets of the Augustan age, are free from similar blemishes. Nothing could exceed the vogue, which Marot's Translation of the Psalms of David into

His exile.

Character of his compositions.

[l] Œuvres de Marot, 2 vols. Geneve, passim. Baillet, Jugement sur les Poëtes, tom. iii. p. 206.

[m] Bayle. Dict. Art. "Marot," p. 154, 155.

[n] La Bruyere, Caracteres, p. 82.

[o] La Fontaine, Ouvrages Posthumes, p. 107.

French,

French, obtained under Francis the First. The Emperor Charles the Fifth, to whom he presented them, rewarded him by a donation of near two hundred pounds Sterling; a sum of very considerable magnitude in that century; and which, even in this age, would not be esteemed a trifling recompence[p]. Like Cervantes and Camoëns, Marot was a soldier, as well as a poet. At the battle of Pavia, in 1525, he did not imitate the example of Horace at Philippi, who, by his own admission, threw away his shield and fled. On the contrary Marot, after receiving a wound, fell into the hands of the enemy, and was detained during a long time in prison. Neither the bounty of Francis the First, to whom he was hereditary valet de chambre; nor the protection extended to him by Margaret, Francis's sister, the illustrious Queen of Navarre; nor the charms of his poetry, could prevent his becoming the victim of his imprudence, profligacy, and want of restraint over his passions. At the age of fifty, he expired in indigence, beyond the Alps; as Spenser, Otway, and Chatterton among us, breathed their last amidst the severest privations of poverty, in the streets of Dublin, or of London.

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Particulars of his life and end.

Baïf, though he appears to have been honored with the patronage of two kings, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, yet, as far as his poetic compositions enable us to form a judg-

Baïf.

[p] Bayle. Dict. Article "Marot," p. 160. 618. Ibid. Art. "Jodelle," and "Belleau." Vie de Ronsard, p. 139.

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ment, is altogether undeserving the attention of posterity, and equally deficient in elegance or beauty of versification. Nor does Belleau lay claim to higher admiration, though his "Pastorals," and his translations of the Odes of Anacreon, obtained him the applause of his contemporaries. Dorat is deservedly consigned to the same oblivion. Yet he was denominated the Pindar of the sixteenth century, and created by Charles the Ninth, "poet royal." Of more than fifty thousand Greek or Latin verses, which Scaliger asserts that Dorat composed, not a couplet has survived the lapse of two hundred years. Like so many other poets in every age, he died at a very advanced period of life, in a destitute state, a short time before the conclusion of Henry the Third's reign. The invention of Anagrams, a passion for which conceits became universal among the French, is attributed to Dorat.[q]

Belleau.

Dorat.

St. Gelais.

St. Gelais was the contemporary, and the rival of Marot, but, with inferior talents and reputation. His verses are easy, flowing, and sometimes beautiful; ornamented with mythological allusions, and crouded with a variety of learning. The greater part of his compositions, whether in Latin or in French, are written on subjects of a light and temporary nature, calculated for the amusement of a voluptuous court, such as those of Francis the First, and of Henry the Second. He survived his compe-

[q] Bayle. Dict. Art. "Dorat," p. 618.

titor

titor Marot, and died at Paris, when sixty-seven years of age, in 1558, towards the conclusion of the last mentioned reign. It is impossible not to admire the delicacy, philosophy, and gaiety, which characterize the verses addressed by St. Gelais to his Lute, during his last illness, when near his end. They rival the celebrated address of the Emperor Hadrian to his departing spirit, and merit commemoration. CHAP. IV. 1574—1589.

" Barbite, qui varios lenisti pectoris œstus,
Dum Juvenem nunc sors, nunc agitabat amor;
Perfice ad extremum, rapidaque incendia Febris,
Qua potes, infirmo fac leviora seni.
Certe ego te faciam, superas evectus ad Auras,
Insignem ad Cytharæ Sydus habere locum." [r]

To Jodelle is due the revival of tragedy among the French, which he formed upon the models of antiquity, with a Chorus terminating every act: but he seems to have adopted the defects of Sophocles and of Seneca, without being able to equal their beauty or sublimity. Yet his " Cleopatra," the first composition of the kind, witnessed in modern ages, in France, was represented with incredible applause, by order of Henry the Second, at Paris. All the court, of both sexes, crouded to behold this novel species of entertainment. " Dido," another tragedy of the same description, attracted equal admiration. Encouraged by popular, as well as by royal favour, Jodelle courted the comic muse with similar success. But, these dramatic pieces cannot be read with patience in the Jodelle.

[r] Œuvres de St. Gelais, passim.

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nineteenth century. Though rewarded and protected by Henry the Second, Jodelle, like so many other men of genius, died at the early age of forty-one, under circumstances of extreme necessity, in 1573, under Charles the Ninth.[s]

Desportes.

Desportes may be said to terminate the list of poets, who flourished under the last kings of Valois. He was enriched by the profusion of Henry the Third, and even acted no inconsiderable political part, during the reign of Henry the Fourth. Desportes is the *Tibullus* of France, amorous, impassioned, and querulous. His elegies, though unequal in purity and elegance, to those of the Roman poet, are neither deficient in softness, nor in harmony. He accompanied his patron and master, the Duke of Anjou, into Poland, when elected sovereign of that country; and he gives in one of his poetical compositions, a hideous picture of the Polish manners, people, and nobility[t]. In order to soothe the distress of Henry the Third, for the loss of his two minions, Quelus and Maugiron, who were both killed in a duel; Desportes did not hesitate to prostitute his talents, by composing epitaphs to their memory, and exhausting panegyric in their praise[u]. He was splendidly rewarded for these servile offerings of the muse, by a prince whose munifi-

Munificence of Henry the Third.

[s] Recherches de Pasquier. lib. 7. cap. 7. p. 618. Bayle. Dict. Art. "Jodelle." Dict. Hist. a Lyon, 1789. vol. v. Art. "Jodelle," p. 8 and 9.

[t] Œuvres de Desportes, Antwerp, 1591, p. 427, 428.

[u] Ibid. p. 478—481.

cence

cence towards his favorites, observed no limits. It may justly be doubted whether Virgil received from the liberality of Octavia and Augustus, greater marks of pecuniary bounty, than Desportes drew from his royal patrons. Charles the Ninth bestowed on him no less a sum than eight hundred gold crowns, for his poem of "Rodomont;" and the Duke de Joyeuse is said to have paid one of his sonnets, with the donation of an abbey. Henry the Third heaped upon him ecclesiastical preferments, and he must be considered as forming an exception to the poverty, so generally attendant on poets, or men of genius. Desportes enjoyed a prodigious income, and survived the period of civil war by which France was so long desolated, having witnessed the tranquillity of Henry the Fourth's reign. He died in 1606, at the age of sixty.

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towards that poet.

But the pre-eminence of poetical genius among the French, during the sixteenth century, is unquestionably due to Ronsard. The universality of his talents, the extent and variety of his compositions, the profound erudition scattered throughout his writings, and the splendor of his diction, eclipsed those of all his contemporaries. To him may be attributed the introduction of the higher and more sublime species of poetry. The "Franciad," dedicated to Charles the Ninth, in whose honor it is composed, forms the first epic poem, strictly so denominated, that appeared in the French language, though it was left imperfect and unfinished, on account of the premature death of

Ronsard.

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that prince [x]. However inferior to the great models of antiquity which he copied, the "Franciad" of Ronsard, is neither defective in strength of genius, luxuriancy of fancy, nor harmony of versification.

Universality of his genius.

With him, arose comedy likewise in France. The "Plutus" of Aristophanes, which he translated, formed the earliest production of that kind, given to the inhabitants of Paris. It was performed under the reign of Henry the Second, at the theatre of Coqueret, with universal applause [y]. The diversity of his compositions, in every branch of poetry, excites equal admiration and astonishment. His contemporaries, who beheld him through too favorable a medium, rashly ventured to compare him with Homer and Virgil. He may perhaps with more justice be cited as the rival, though still at humble distance, of Anacreon, Pindar, and Catullus. In various of his lighter pieces, which he entitles "Gayetez," we certainly trace much of the hilarity and wanton mirth of the Ionian poet. His "Dythirambics" sometimes contain a portion of the rich stream of harmony, and the unfettered grace of Pindar; but he wants the sublimity and grandeur of conception that characterize the Theban poet. "The Emathian Conqueror" would not perhaps have spared the dwelling of Ronsard, as he did the house of Pindar, if he had overrun France, as he conquered Greece. Yet

[x] Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. iii. Paris, 1604, p. 1—213, passim.
[y] Vie de Ronsard, p. 125.

many

many of Ronsard's productions display a classic mind. His poem, commemorating the festive offering of a goat adorned with garlands, which was presented as a testimony of homage to the genius of Jodelle, is peculiarly beautiful[z]. Some of Ronsard's "Sonnets" to his mistress, may perhaps support a comparison in warmth and tenderness, with those addressed by Catullus to Lesbia. Even inanimate objects derived celebrity, while they attained immortality from his pen. The fountain of "Bellerie" in his native province, the Vendomois, which became scarcely less renowned among his contemporaries, than did the classical spring of Blandusia under Augustus, formed one of his favorite subjects of poetic description. He frequently retired to Bellerie, as Petrarch did to Vaucluse, there to indulge his pensive meditations[a]. Like Desportes, he did not refuse to commemorate the minions of Henry the Third. His epitaphs on Quelus and on Maugiron, are elegant compositions, as well as models of courtly panegyric[b]. If he is thought to have degraded the dignity of poetry, by composing an epitaph on the grey-hound of Charles the Ninth, or on the lap-dog of Madame de Villeroy; it may be remembered that Pope, the proudest poet of the last century, who boasts perpetually of his independance, and who affects to carry his indifference for crowned heads almost to contempt, was

His sonnets,

and epitaphs.

[z] Œuvres de Ronsard, "Gayetez," p. 333—346.
[a] Vie de Ronsard, p. 149, and p. 178.
[b] Œuvres de Ronsard, "Epitaphes," p. 87—89.

not

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not ashamed to write a distich for Frederic, Prince of Wales's dog at Kew. Ronsard consulted more the majesty of the weeping muse, in his epitaphs on the great Constable Montmorenci, killed at the battle of St. Denis, and on the historian, Philip de Comines.[c]

Honours conferred on him,

From his earliest years, he was the companion and attendant of kings. After having accompanied James the Fifth of Scotland, who, in 1537, had married the Princess Magdalen, daughter of Francis the First, on his return from France to his own dominions, as one of the pages of that monarch; he passed into the service of Charles, Duke of Orleans, youngest of the three sons of Francis[d]. Henry the Second associated him to all his pastimes, peculiarly to the martial exercises and diversions in which that monarch excelled. The force and address of Ronsard in these exhibitions of corporal strength and prowess, were not less conspicuous, than the elegance of his intellectual endowments[e]. Charles the Ninth expressed for him the most partial affection, commanded him not to quit the court, and enriched him by the donation of various abbies or benefices. The verses composed by Charles, which he addressed to Ronsard, are to be found among the works of the poet; and if they convey no elevated idea of the King's talents as a writer, they

by Charles the Ninth.

[c] Œuvres de Ronsard, "Epitaphes," p. 47—55, and p. 60, 61, and p. 87—103.

[d] Vie de Ronsard, p. 115, 116.

[e] Ibid. p. 119, 120.

at

at least display his attachment to the muses[f]. Under his successor Henry the Third, Ronsard was chosen one of the members of an academy, in which the principal men of letters met for the purpose of conversation, with a view to communicate their respective compositions. The assembly was held at the palace of the Louvre, in Henry's presence.[g]

Celebrity of Ronsard.

Nor was his celebrity confined to France, but extended to other kingdoms, and was only limited by the language in which he wrote. Elizabeth, Queen of England, delighted in his writings, and expressed her admiration for their author[h]. Even the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, to whose charms he had done homage during the transitory reign of her first husband, Francis the Second; in the course of her long and her solitary imprisonment at Tutbury and at Fotheringay castles, soothed her calamities by the perusal of Ronsard's works. As a proof of her esteem, she sent him in 1583, only four years before her execution, by Nau her secretary, a silver Buffet, on which Mount Parnassus was designated, surmounted by Pegasus. Its value was estimated at a thousand crowns; and on it she caused to be inscribed, "A Ronsard, l'Apollon de la Source des Muses[i]." At the ceremony of the "Floral Games," instituted and held in the city of Toulouse, the presidents,

Presents made him.

[f] Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. iii. p. 217—223. Vie de Ronsard, p. 141—144.

[g] Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. iii. p. 176, and p. 147.

[h] Vie de Ronsard, p. 147.

[i] Ibid. p. 147, 148.

par-

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parliament, and people, unanimously decreed the pre-eminence to Ronsard. Not satisfied with conferring on him a wreath of eglantine, the customary reward of the victorious poet; they sent him a statue of Minerva in massy silver, accompanied with the most flattering testimonies of their admiration[k]. He expired at the age of sixty-one, in 1585, at the abbey of St. Cosme, near Tours, one of the preferments with which he had been rewarded by the liberality of the kings of France. His funeral was attended by the most illustrious persons for rank, talents, and virtue. The Dukes of Angoulême and of Joyeuse, together with the Cardinal of Bourbon, and the principal members of the parliament of Paris, did not disdain to follow in the procession, and to perform the last honors to so distinguished a genius[l]. Cosmo, Great Duke of Tuscany, had in like manner accompanied the remains of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, to the grave. Du Perron, who became afterwards a member of the sacred college, and who had already displayed talents of various kinds, pronounced his funeral oration[m]. Such was the respect and estimation in which his works were held by foreign nations, that they were read as models of poetic beauty, in all the French schools of Flanders, England, Germany, and Poland[n]. Like Hadrian, when expiring, he composed some lines, addressed to his departing

Posthumous honors.

[k] Vie de Ronsard, p. 137, 138. [l] Ibid. p. 159, 160.
[m] Oraison funebre de du Perron, p. 184—240.
[n] Vie de Ronsard, p. 168, 169.

soul,

soul, which are not inferior in vivacity to those attributed to the Roman Emperor; of which they may be esteemed a parody[o]. Criticism itself was silent, or became converted to panegyric, when employed upon Ronsard; and Joseph Scaliger, the *Bentley* of the sixteenth century, whose pen inspired so much dread among his contemporaries, dedicated to Ronsard, his favorite Anacreontics. We may judge of the reverential awe which Scaliger felt for the French poet, by the language which he uses in his address. It is such as Horace would have adopted, when speaking of Homer:

Testimony of Scaliger, to his merit.

" Quo te carmine, qua prece,
" Quo pingui genium thure, adeam tuum,
" Immensi sobolem ætheris,
" Qui musis animi prodigus, imperas ?" [p]

Notwithstanding the obligations which the French language owes to Ronsard, in whose hands, from an unpolished and unharmonious tongue, it became copious, rich, and melodious, he is not exempt from numerous defects. But, they may perhaps be considered more as the faults of the age, than of the poet. His productions are generally loaded with mythology and fable; nor can we acquit him of some degree of impiety and profanation, in comparing the labours of Hercules, to those of Jesus Christ[q]. It must however be admitted that Petrarch is guilty of similar indecency in

Faults of Ronsard.

[o] Vie de Ronsard, p. 151.
[p] Ibid. p. 167, 168.
[q] Bayle, Dict. Art. " Ronsard," p. 895, 896.

various

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various passages of his poetical compositions; nor are Boccaccio, Boyardo, and Ariosto, exempt from the same, or greater imputations. Ronsard, though idolized by his countrymen in that age, has now sunk into comparative oblivion, and may be said to hold nearly the same rank among the French, as Spenser his contemporary, does among the English poets. If the "Fairy Queen" of the latter, considered as an epic poem, is superior to the "Franciad," the variety and universality of Ronsard's talents, more than compensate for this single point of superiority in Spenser.

Rabelais.

Rabelais and Montaigne, neither of whom were poets, constitute the only authors in the walk of polite letters, during the period under our review, who can be said to have escaped the general fate of their contemporaries, and to be read, after the lapse of two centuries, beyond the limits of France. Rabelais, notwithstanding the extreme indecency and low buffoonery of his works; qualities which in some measure are to be attributed to the age in which he wrote; contains so much genuine and original humor, so much grotesque fancy, incidents so comic, satire so delicate and keen, mixed with learning so various and profound, that he must remain for ever agreeable to mankind. Yet is it unjust either to Cervantés or to Swift, to compare Rabelais with those writers, both of whom are his superiors in all respects, except perhaps in erudition. It is probable, that the greater number of persons who peruse the

"History of Gargantua and Pantagruel," see in the work, only its eccentric and extravagant outside. But, the ridicule of the church of Rome and of the monastic orders; as well as of the Catholic religion, its ceremonies, creeds, and injunctions; escapes continually through the disguise, under which Rabelais found it requisite to conceal so hazardous an attempt. It may excite some surprize, that a man who evidently despised and disbelieved the most essential articles of the Romish faith, should, after practising medicine at Montpelier, have been promoted to a prebendary in a collegiate church, and finally be made curate of the village of Meudon, near Paris[r]. It would seem, however, that the Cardinal du Bellai, one of his patrons, who protected and preferred him, was not more persuaded of the sanctity of the religion which he professed, and to the first dignities of which he attained, than Rabelais himself. That prelate, in defiance of the injunctions of the Romish see, had not hesitated to contract a marriage with Madame de Chatillon, though motives of convenience induced him to conceal the transaction[s]. The veil of affected folly and absurdity, under which Rabelais aimed his shafts at popes, princes, and monks, not only saved him from punishment, but acquired him admirers or protectors among men of the highest rank: while the Protestants, who gravely and morosely attacked the ponti-

His ridicule of the Romish church.

[r] Œuvres de Rabelais, Vie, vol. i. p. 4.
[s] Brantome, vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 177—180.

fical

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fical power or prerogatives, were seized and committed to the flames. Rabelais belongs to the age of Francis the First, and Henry the Second; under the latter of which kings he ended his days in 1553, at Paris, having attained to an advanced period of life.

Montaigne.

Montaigne flourished under the last princes of Valois, and survived the extinction of that family. Born under Francis the First, in 1533, at the castle of his own name, in the province of Perigord, he expired under the same roof in 1592, at near sixty years of age; preserving to the last moment of his existence, all the freshness and vigour of his intellectual faculties. Never did any man possess a more keen and intuitive knowledge of human nature, or more delicately anatomize and lay bare to inspection, the recesses of the human heart and character. Too mercurial and elegant in his mental formation, to support the fetters of a profession, he renounced the study, as well as the practice of the law: but he neither disdained nor declined to act a part in the public functions of magistrature; and he was deputed by the city of Bourdeaux, as one of their Delegates, on the convocation of the States-general at Blois, in 1588, under Henry the Third. The celebrated Buchanan was one of his preceptors, and the attainments of Montaigne seem to have embraced all the treasures of antient literature. His "Essays" are equally original, eccentric, and not less amusing, than the writings of Rabelais. Montaigne was a man

Nature of his essays.

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man of rank, as well as of independant fortune; and the careless, but graceful negligence of a gentleman, characterizes his style. Though he talks perpetually, and almost exclusively of himself, his egotism never offends, and generally entertains the reader. Ease and nature seem to guide his pen; which is however disgraced by equal transgressions of decency, with those to be found in Rabelais, and in Brantome. The most accurate, as well as intimate acquaintance with the Greek and Roman writers, is visible throughout every page of Montaigne. From Homer down to Claudian, and from Herodotus to Procopius and Zosimus, he is familiar with their writings. He oppresses us with citations from all the poets of antiquity; and he never disdains to fortify, or to support his positions, by an appeal to their authority. He is a sceptic, and takes little pains to disguise it, though he chose, from motives of philosophic convenience, to live and die within the pale of the Catholic church. We may judge of the avidity with which his essays were devoured by the public, when we reflect that even civil war, and every kind of internal calamity, could not impede their reception. They first appeared in 1580, under Henry the Third; and in 1588, a period of rebellion and anarchy, he published the fifth edition at Paris, amidst the convulsions of "the League[t]." It is difficult to con-

Genius of his writings.

Their favorable reception.

[t] Journal du Voyage de Montaigne, Disc. prelim. vol. i. p. 64 and 65.

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ceive a stronger proof of general admiration. The prodigious variety of subjects which he discusses in his "Essays," his rapid and unexpected transitions from one object of enquiry or examination to another, the extent and truth of his observations, and the profundity or perspicuity of his researches on legislature, education, religion, medicine, and manners;—all these circumstances, which characterize his compositions, will, notwithstanding their defects of language, render them always attractive to such as wish to study man.

Architecture.

Catherine of Medicis, who descended from a family immortalized by their protection of all the arts, desirous of transplanting them into France, constructed the palace of the Tuilleries, which she commenced in 1564, soon after the termination of the first civil wars. Philibert de Lorme, and John Bullan, were the architects whom she employed to raise that stately edifice, which she completed before her decease in 1588, notwithstanding the troubles of the kingdom, and the exhausted state of the finances[u]. It formed unquestionably the finest monument of architecture, then to be found in Europe, beyond the Alps. Whitehall, in which palace Elizabeth resided, could enter into no competition with the Tuilleries: it was only an irregular assemblage of Gothic buildings, castellated and embattled, extending

Construction of the Tuilleries.

[u] L'Art de Ver. vol. i. p. 648.

along

along the northern bank of the Thames, for near half a mile, from the village of Charing to Westminster. Inigo Jones had not then constructed the Banquetting House, which rose under James the First. Pericles or Augustus might have inhabited the Tuilleries, as Palladio or Michael Angelo might have planned it. Whitehall exhibited only a specimen of barbarous taste, accommodated to the martial exercises or diversions which still characterized the age of Elizabeth.

Light-houses.

Louis de Foix, a native of Paris, began in 1584, the celebrated tower of Cordouan, situate at the mouth of the river Garonne; designed as a Pharos, or light-house, for directing ships bound to and from the port of Bourdeaux. Its position, on a rock in the midst of the sea, exposes it to the utmost fury of the elements. Three stories, ornamented with the different orders of architecture, terminating pyramidically, form the tower itself, whose solidity, proportions, and strength, have secured its duration down to the present time. It was not entirely completed till the year 1611, under the reign of Louis the Thirteenth[x]. Louis de Foix had previously been selected by Philip the Second, from among all the architects of Europe, to construct his monastic palace and Mausoleum of the Escurial. We must consider such a choice of a French artist, in preference to one of Philip's own sub-

Louis de Foix.

[x] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 204. Dict. Univ. de la France, vol. i. p 467—469.

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jects and countrymen, as a proof either of great liberality of mind in the Spanish sovereign, or as carrying with it an internal evidence, that his own dominions did not furnish men competent to execute such a work. But, Venice could have lent him Palladio. If nevertheless the instrument of St. Lawrence's martyrdom, must have constituted the form of Philip's gloomy abode, all the talents of Palladio would have been lost or distorted on such a pile.

Nature of his structures.

Strength and massy grandeur seem to characterize the structures raised by Louis de Foix, as they do the works of Vanbrugh among us. He united both those qualities in the tower of Cordouan, and it may justly excite enquiry, how that edifice has now stood above two centuries, uninjured, though in a position where it must brave all the tempests of the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic; while the Eddystone light-house, constructed by Winstanley in a similar situation, could not sustain the memorable storm of 1703. The superiority of the French engineer over the English architect, seems to be proved by the mere narration of the two facts, though the former preceded the latter in point of time, by near a century.

Painting, and sculpture.

No regular school of painting or sculpture, had appeared in France, before the extinction of the race of Valois. The exertions of Francis the First had nevertheless awakened the genius of the nation, in both those branches of art. John Gougeon, and Germain Pillon, who were esteemed very expert sculptors, had attained to a high

a high degree of reputation under Henry the Third [y]. Leonardo da Vinci, who by a singular destiny expired in the arms of Francis the First, was an Italian, and does not seem to have left behind him any eminent pupils. Scarcely a single statue of bronze, or of marble, ornamented the metropolis in 1589, at the time of Henry's death. The monuments erected by that Prince, to the memory of his three minions, St. Megrin, Quelus, and Maugiron, in the church of St. Paul, which were composed of the most costly materials; had been demolished by the fury of the Parisians, on their receiving intelligence of the assassinations committed at Blois [z]. Medals, commemorative of great or auspicious events, were frequently struck, and scattered among the people, or distributed as marks of distinction. Considerable delicacy was displayed in their fabrication, as well as in the devices or legends with which they were ornamented. Jane, Queen of Navarre, in 1569, presented gold medallions to the principal German commanders of the auxiliary army, which arrived to the assistance of the Hugonots. On them were inscribed mottos, containing an allusion to their perilous situation, and their religious union [a]. Three years afterwards, at the nuptials of Henry, King of Navarre, with Margaret of Valois, gold and silver medals were thrown to the populace. The inscription,

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Medals.

[y] Satyre Mem. vol. ii. p. 403.
[z] L'Etoile, p. 114.
[a] Memoires de Cast. vol. i. p. 241.

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"Constricta hoc discordia vinculo," which was designed to signify the extinction of past animosities, to be produced by the marriage, only served to place in a more conspicuous point of view, the perfidy of a court, which had already planned and matured the massacre of Paris. [b]

Erudition.

The feature which peculiarly distinguished and characterized the age, was erudition. Letters, which had revived in Italy about the middle of the fifteenth century, did not penetrate into France till above sixty years later. Neither Charles the Eighth, nor Louis the Twelfth, extended to them any protection. It was Francis the First who cherished, patronized, and rendered their study general among his subjects. The productions of Athens and of Rome, in poetry, history, eloquence, and philosophy, became known to the French under his reign; and all the beauties of the antients, were embellished by the charms of novelty. Captivated with graces so much superior to every other, and with which they had been hitherto unacquainted, they knew no limit to their enthusiastic admiration. All classes of society caught the infection: princes, nobles, soldiers, even ladies, cultivating learning, became familiar with the language of Cicero, and of Homer. Erudition was deemed necessary for attaining to employments of state, and ambition derived support from the study of

Enthusiasm for the literary productions of antiquity.

[b] Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 87.

letters. L'Hopital owed in a great measure, his progressive elevation through the various dignities of the law, to its highest eminence; not so much to his superior knowledge of jurisprudence, as to his reputation for science [c]. Perhaps the same observation may apply with equal truth, to Bacon among us. His fame at least, does not repose, like that of his contemporary, Coke, upon legal, but upon philosophical and scientific foundations. Coligni, who in the midst of civil war, found leisure to read the Roman writers, conversed with fluency and elegance in Latin [d]. Marshal Strozzi, though engaged during his whole life, in the tumult of a camp, translated the Commentaries of Cæsar into Greek, with notes and applications calculated for rendering the original more intelligible or useful, to men of the military profession. "I have heard Ronsard and Durant," adds Brantome, "express their amazement at the "purity and eloquence of the Greek transla-"tion, which in their estimation was not inferior "to the Latin of the Roman Dictator." [e]

Examples.

Strozzi.

It formed the ordinary amusement of Henry the Third, to retire after dinner to his closet, with Baccio del Bene and Corbinelli, two learned Florentines, who read to him the works of Polybius and of Tacitus, in their original languages. We can scarcely credit this fact, related of so dissolute a Prince, if we did not receive it

Henry the Third, and the King of Navarre.

[c] Trad. de l'Hop. Eclairciss. vol. i. p. 9 and 10.
[d] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Franc. p. 197.
[e] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Etrang. p. 261 and 262.

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from the authority of Davila [f]. Henry, King of Navarre, though naturally averse to sedentary and studious occupations, yet was versed in Greek, and accustomed from his infancy, to cite or to repeat passages from their poets and historians. It is a well-known and interesting anecdote, that while yet a child, he adopted for his motto, the words, "ἢ νικαν, ἢ ἀποθανεῖν," either conquer, or die; and that he refused to explain their meaning to the queen-mother Catherine of Medicis, who was anxious to know their import [g]. L'Hopital addressed many of his Latin epistles, to Margaret, daughter of Francis the First, Duchess of Savoy; and that Princess, to whom her father when expiring, recommended the protection of the muses, improved herself by the frequent study of Cicero and of Horace [h]. When the Polish embassadors in 1573, arrived at Paris, to lay their crown at the feet of the Duke of Anjou, the Bishop of Cracow, one of their number, having harangued the young queen of Navarre, Margaret, in Latin; she instantly replied in the same language, recapitulating, and answering every part of his speech, with facility and precision [i]. Catherine of Medicis, who probably from her having been married at the early age of fourteen, was less skilled in the languages of antiquity, employed an interpreter on the same occasion. Her selection fell on Catherine de

Princesses of France.

[f] Davila, p. 481.
[g] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 248.
[h] Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. ii. p. 123—134. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 706.
[i] Vie de Marg. p. 122.

Cler-

Clermont, one of the most beautiful and accomplished ladies of the court; but, not more eminent for the graces of her person, than for her erudition [k]. Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, and Renee, Duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis the Twelfth, two princesses who from the superiority of their understanding, embraced the reformed doctrines, were distinguished by their proficiency in many branches of science, as well as by their protection of learning.

Imitations of the antients.

To such a point of perfection was the imitation of the antients carried, that many of the productions of L'Hopital, and of Morvilliers, Bishop of Orleans, were not distinguishable by the ablest critics, from the writings of antiquity. The Latin epistle of L'Hopital, addressed to James du Faur, intitled "An Imprecation against Suits at Law," deceived the learned so completely, as to be not only attributed to various Roman poets; but, even to exercise ingenuity in pointing out the interpolations and alterations, introduced into the original text [l]. We may see in D'Aubigné, how elegant were the Latin verses, composed by the young nobility; and what facility they possessed in making them, upon every occasion [m]. Even from the pageants and amusements of the court, that classic language was not excluded; and females of the highest distinction recited Roman

Universality of the Latin language.

[k] Vie de Marg. p. 122. Le Lab. sur Cast, vol. ii. p. 102—105.
[l] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 137—144. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 494 and p. 504.
[m] D'Aub. Mem. p. 85 and p. 89.

poetry,

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poetry, with equal grace and elegance. At a species of Masque, represented before Henry the Second, in 1554, at St. Germain near Paris, in which piece, six ladies, or princesses, habited as Sybils, performed the principal parts; Mary, Queen of Scots, then in very early youth, who had been brought up in the French court, personated the Delphic Sybil. Addressing herself to the Dauphin, her destined husband, who became afterwards Francis the Second, she predicted in a distich, composed by St. Gelais the poet, the future union, in his person, of the British and French crowns;

> "Delphica, Delphini si mentem oracula tangunt,
> "Britonibus junges regna Britanna tuis." [n]

Predictions.

If we consider that Mary, Queen of England, who was already married to Philip, Prince of Spain, then reigned in this country; and if we further reflect that Elizabeth her sister, might in turn ascend the throne, in case of Mary's demise without issue; it must be owned that St. Gelais's prophecy was a very bold anticipation of futurity. Never did prediction prove more unfortunate. The last line requires some explanation. It is addressed to Francis, as Duke of Brittany, and promises him, that to the Bretons who were already his own subjects, he shall one day join the British realms.

A perfect acquaintance with the Latin language, was regarded as an indispensable qualification for embassadors to many of the European

[n] Œuvres Poetiq. de St. Gelais, a Paris, 1719, p. 12, 13.

courts,

courts, and highly introductory to all foreign missions or public employments [o]. French had not then been adopted as a general medium of conversation throughout Europe. Spanish was much more generally used as such, which formed the language of the Imperial court of Vienna, as well as that of Madrid, till the reign of Rodolph the Second [p]. Montaigne informs us that he was instructed in Latin, before he was permitted to learn his native language: so perfectly did he possess the former, that the celebrated Buchanan, who was one of his preceptors, confessed his apprehension of conversing with his own pupil [q]. D'Aubigné says, that at six years of age, he could read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: when only in his eighth year, he translated the "Crito" of Plato, into French [r]. Military men composed their own epitaphs, or those of their friends, slain in action. "When la Case de Mirambeau was "killed in 1574," says De Thou, "in his boot "was found the following distich written with "his own hand, as if he had foreseen his end;

Utility and vogue of the Latin language.

"Desine migrantem lugere, viator, et hospes.
"Non careo patria: me caret illa magis." [s]

The satirical sonnets which, originating on a thousand trifling subjects, were circulated in the courts of Charles the Ninth, or of Henry the

Latin verses.

[o] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 776.
[p] Brantome, vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 78.
[q] Essais de Montaigne, vol. i. p. 254—256. Voyages de Montaigne, Disc. Prelim. vol. i. p. 70 and 71. Biog. Dict. vol. ix. p. 298.
[r] D'Aub. Mem. p. 4 and 5. [s] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 45.

Third,

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Third, were rarely written in French. Wits and satirists preferred the Latin, as being more expressive, and equally intelligible. The six elegant lines, composed by a courtier in 1577, upon the comet which was then visible, whose appearance impressed Catherine of Medicis with so much terror; as well as most of the epigrams levelled against the minions, or the ministers of Henry the Third, were written in the language and spirit of Martial[t]. Brantome, who is only a dissolute man of the world, and a servile courtier, is yet an accomplished scholar.

Munificence to men of genius.

Never was greater munificence extended to men of genius, in every branch of art and science, than by the Princes of Valois. The bounties of Louis the Fourteenth, so vaunted by Voltaire, might be dispensed with more parade and ostentation; but they were neither more general, nor superior in extent. Francis the First, not satisfied with encouraging, as well as recompensing literary merit in his own subjects, exerted himself to discover and reward it among every foreign nation. He sent several learned men, at his own expence, to travel into Greece and the countries of Asia Minor, in order to collect antiquities, manuscripts, and other monuments[u]. Royal professors, with liberal pecuniary stipends, were appointed to teach in the colleges which he founded or endowed throughout France. Such was his pre-

Francis the First.

[t] L'Etoile, p. 25 and 26, and p. 37 and p. 80, and p. 108. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 111 and p. 192, and 193.

[u] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 241.

dilection

dilection for persons distinguished by a knowledge of letters, that he usually made choice of them for embassies [x]. Paul Jovius, the historian, enjoyed a pension of two hundred and fifty crowns payable from the treasury, during that monarch's life; but the Constable Montmorenci, with whose character and actions Jovius had taken some unwarrantable liberties, retrenched and struck it off, at the accession of Henry the Second [y]. Jovius, an Italian, born at Como in Lombardy, may be said indeed to have levied contributions from the vanity, the fears, or the expectations of the greatest European Princes his contemporaries. Francis, besides paying him, condescended to write to him in the most flattering manner; while Charles the Fifth, Leo the Tenth, Clement the Seventh, and Cosmo, Great Duke of Tuscany, rewarded, protected, or employed him. His "History," which comprizes the space of fifty years, from 1494, to 1544, embraced all the great events of those reigns or pontificates; and as Jovius was known to dispense panegyric or condemnation, in proportion to the benefits conferred or withheld by sovereigns and ministers, it cannot excite surprize, that posterity have refused him the honors only due to impartiality and truth. It was not by such base condescencions, that Livy, Sallust, or Tacitus, aspired to fame. Nor did Comines, De Thou, or Davila, attain it by similar meanness; from

Jovius.

Character of that writer.

[x] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 241. Biog. Diction. vol. ii. Artic. Budœus.

[y] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Franc. p. 231 and 232.

which

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which imputation, Guicciardini, the contemporary, countryman, and rival of Jovius is exempt.

Comparison of Jovius, and of Guicciardini.

The "History" of Guicciardini commences nearly at the same period of time with that of Jovius, but finishes twelve years earlier, in 1532. A deficiency which is however overpaid by his superior merit, moral, no less than historical. Jovius may in fact be regarded as a venal rhetorician. Guicciardini, though partial to his native country Italy, is an historian. The former wrote in Latin; the latter composed his work in Italian. Both commemorated the events of their own time, and of the same precise period. But, while Guicciardini ranks with Thucydides, Jovius falls nearly to the level of the Byzantine historians. It is probable that Francis the First, notwithstanding his predilection for polite letters, was impelled more by emulation of his rival Charles the Fifth, and his apprehensions of the malignant asperity of Jovius's pen, than by any other motive, to confer on him the pension withdrawn by Montmorenci. Notwithstanding this single instance of resentment, expressed by a minister whose alienation to liberal knowledge was well known, Henry the Second displayed the same princely regard for the productions of genius, which had characterized his father. He was so charmed with the "Cleopatra," a tragedy of Jodelle, as to give the author a present of two hundred and fifty crowns, besides other gratifications [z]. Henry the Third remunerated the

Jodelle.

[z] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 59.

poets

poets Ronsard and Baïf, each, with a thousand crowns, as a recompence for the beautiful verses, composed by them on the occasion of his favorite, Joyeuse's marriage[a]. Even religious prejudices and antipathies, which operated so powerfully in that age, did not prevent Henry from ordering five hundred crowns to be presented to Henry Etienne, a Hugonot, who had written a work of much celebrity, upon the excellence of the French language[b]. At the ceremony of the inauguration and investiture of Francis, Duke of Anjou, as Sovereign of the Netherlands, which was performed at Antwerp, in 1582; the deputies of the Protestants, in the act of homage and congratulation to their new prince, besought of him to take under his protection, letters, together with their professors; and to honor them, according to the example left him by Francis the First[c]. He promised to comply with the request. Prelates and Cardinals expended the revenues of their ecclesiastical preferments, in the patronage of genius. The vices and irregularities of the Cardinal of Lorrain, were concealed and almost forgotten, in the munificent largesses with which he conciliated literary favor. He was the Mecœnas of the court of Henry the Second, and his two immediate successors.[d]

Etienne.

Cardinal of Lorrain.

[a] L'Etoile, p. 46.
[b] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 193.
[c] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 605.
[d] Brantome, vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 416. Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. i. p. 46.

The

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Art of printing.

The art of printing, in the course of considerably more than a century which had elapsed since its invention, having diffused very widely every species of knowledge, had penetrated among all orders of society. The *Morels* and the *Etiennes*, celebrated printers, carried the art at Paris, to a pitch of eminence, before 1559, the year of Henry the Second's death [e]. One of the former family, convicted of heresy, was burnt at the stake in the succeeding reign [f].

Manutius.

Manutius, employed by the Venetians, and by various of the Romish pontiffs, had immortalized his own name, by giving to the world the most perfect and beautiful editions of Tully, as well as of many of the Greek and Roman writers. The fame of Aldus Manutius was sustained by his son Paul, who died in 1574, at Rome [g]. Fourteen years afterwards, in 1588, Metayer, the royal printer at Paris, gave to the public a magnificent work, executed by order of the King. It contained the breviaries and prayers of the Romish ritual, in two folio volumes. The paper and the type were equally beautiful [h]. With the benefits and advantages of printing, were however proportionably diffused its evils.

Libels, numerous.

Under a reign such as that of Henry the Third, when the royal consideration and authority had become so much relaxed, the press teemed with libels of the most insolent nature. The

[e] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 206.
[f] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 103.
[g] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 206. Biog. Dict. vol. ix. p. 52 and 53.
[h] Satyre Menippee, vol. ii. p. 150, 151.

Hugo.

Hugonots, after the death of Charles the Ninth, published several severe and satirical pieces against Catherine of Medicis, then regent during the absence of Henry in Poland. She was exhorted by the council of state, to punish the authors with rigor. But, her magnanimity, which disdained the advice, permitted an uninterrupted course to all the accusations or calumnies of her enemies; a part of her conduct in which she resembled the great Frederic, King of Prussia, in our own time[i]. Henry, on his return to France, did not imitate her in so shining a feature of her character. On the contrary, the only instances of rigor which can be laid to his charge, and which contrast extraordinarily with the lenity or apathy demonstrated in his general administration, were exerted against libellers. In March, 1577, while the court resided at Blois, a satirical composition, in which the King, the queen-mother, and other persons of distinction, were treated with extreme severity, was laid under the bolster of Catherine of Medicis's bed. It is a fact not less ridiculous than true, that for this crime, of which the author was unknown, all the poets about the court were immediately seized and sent to prison[k]. We owe the exile, and long residence of the celebrated Marquis de St. Evrémond among us, under Charles the Second, to a similar production, which compelled him to quit the court of Louis the Fourteenth, and to abandon his native country.

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Severity exercised towards libellers.

[i] Davila, p. 418.

[k] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 177.

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The faction of "the League," from the time of its first formation, seems to have been fully sensible of the importance of the press; and the leaders made bold, as well as frequent application to the passions of the people, through its medium. In 1583, before the great convulsions took place, which marked the close of Henry's reign, Roziere, Archdeacon of Toul, was brought before the council, to answer for having composed and published a book, entitled "Genealogy of the Dukes of Lorrain and Bar." The object of it went to prove, that Hugh Capet, as well as his descendants were only usurpers; and that the Dukes of Lorrain constituted the genuine representatives of Charlemagne. Some passages in the work, were likewise of a nature personally insulting and injurious to the King himself. Roziere would have infallibly expiated his offence by a public execution, if he had not been extricated by the powerful interposition of the Duke of Lorrain, and the queen-mother[1]. Belleville, a Protestant gentleman, having in the following year committed a crime of less political magnitude, but to which Henry was deeply sensible, by writing a satire on his private debaucheries, was instantly arrested, and brought to trial. Convicted of being the author, he was drawn in a sledge to the place of execution, hanged, and his body, together with the work, thrown into the flames. All his estates and property were confiscated to

Roziere.

Punishment of Belleville.

[1] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 70 and 71.

the

the crown [m]. Even insanity formed no protection against the rigor of the laws, in cases of a libellous nature. Le Breton, a man of a heated or disordered imagination, bred to the bar, ventured in 1586, to stigmatize the magistrates and the sovereign, with equally betraying the cause of the lower classes. Although in the course of his trial, he gave numerous indications of an alienated mind, and notwithstanding the intercession of the judges themselves, who besought of the King to remit his punishment, he was condemned and executed [n]. These exemplary chastisements did not however deter the heads of "the League" from publishing a variety of pamphlets, calculated to withdraw the obedience of the subject from the crown. Such was the avidity of the people to peruse them, and so odious was the government become, that no penalties could deter the printers or venders from circulating them through the metropolis. Impositions of the grossest nature, and invectives the most bitter, neither of which were spared, met with a ready belief. The universal defection which followed, sufficiently demonstrated how powerful an engine was the press, in the hands of a desperate and unprincipled faction. [o]

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Powerful effect of the press.

Public, as well as private libraries, were already become common and general, before the

Libraries.

[m] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 201 and 202. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 184.

[n] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 33 and 34. De Thou, vol. viii. p. 613—615. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fr. p. 213 and 214.

[o] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 16 and 17.

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close of Henry's reign. Francis the First began the celebrated collection of books at the palace of Fontainbleau, of which, Budæus, one of the most learned men of the age, was constituted librarian. It had attained to very considerable magnitude, before that Prince's death [p].

Budæus. His works.

William Budé, or Budæus, the friend of Erasmus, and his rival in literary reputation, was born at Paris in 1467, under the reign of Louis the Eleventh, though he did not die till 1540, at a very advanced period of life. The sixteenth century, to which he belongs, produced few men more justly celebrated for profound erudition. Francis the First not only honored him with the most familiar intercourse, but sent Budæus as embassador to Leo the Tenth. His works which excited the admiration of his contemporaries, are now in a great degree unknown or forgotten, while those of Erasmus survive: a circumstance resulting perhaps less from the superiority of the natural or acquired endowments of the latter, than from the greater elegance, graces, and beauty of Erasmus's writings. Budæus, more accurately skilled in antiquity, jurisprudence, and all the compositions of science, wrote only for the learned. Erasmus charmed not merely men of letters, but mankind. Hence the different degree of fame which they respectively enjoy, after the lapse of near three centuries.

[p] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 241 and 242.

Catherine

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Catherine of Medicis, who emulated and imitated Francis the First in the cultivation of polite letters, augmented the library which he had founded, by so many costly works, manuscripts, and productions in every language, that at the time of her decease, it was accounted the finest collection of its kind in Europe [q]. Not satisfied with forming a library for the crown, she exerted equal efforts to possess a similar treasure, herself, at Chenonceaux, a castle in Touraine, to which she frequently retired, where she was only accompanied by a few courtiers of both sexes. We may form some estimate of its size and value, by knowing that at the death of Marshal Strozzi, she added his collection of books, calculated to be worth above seven thousand crowns, to her own library [r]. It is probable that no private collection in the kingdom, at that period, could compare in beauty or magnificence with Strozzi's, who being himself a nobleman of Florentine extraction, had purchased the library of Cardinal Rodolfo at Rome, a prelate eminent for his taste and erudition [s]. The great Chancellor l'Hopital, in 1573, only estimates his books, exclusive of memoirs, antiquities, and medals, at the sum of five hundred livres, or little more than twenty pounds; and he expresses great anxiety in his will, that they may suffer no diminution. [t]

Library of Strozzi,

and of l'Hopital.

[q] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 132.
[r] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 263.
[s] Brant. ibid.
[t] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 492.

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State of the Drama.

The Drama may be said to have remained still in its infancy, during the whole period under our review. It was not till after the accession of Henry the Second, that any dramatic exhibition whatever was performed in France. Only mysteries, and a sort of holy pageants or representations, were known under Francis the First; although Leo the Tenth, before the year 1520, had introduced scenic entertainments among the Italians. The Cardinal of Ferrara, Archbishop of Lyons, one of the most magnificent and accomplished princes of the age, first presented to the French court, the spectacle of a tragi-comedy, in 1549, at Lyons. The performers, both male and female, being brought by him, at a great expence, from Italy, the piece was represented in the language of that country, with so much grace and spirit, accompanied with interludes, that the King, Queen, and spectators, expressed the utmost delight at the entertainment. It was said to have cost the Cardinal, five thousand crowns[u]. St. Gelais the poet, having translated the "Sophonisba," of Trissino, and ornamented or altered it in such a manner, as to accommodate it to the taste of his own country; it was acted by order of Catherine of Medicis, at Blois, soon after the commencement of Charles the Ninth's reign[x]. We find that in 1564, a comedy, the subject of which was borrowed from Ariosto, was

Tragi-comedy. Its introduction into France.

St. Gelais.

[u] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 20—22.

[x] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 51. Brant. ibid.

repre-

represented by her command, at Fontainbleau; and that the Duchess of Angouleme, natural daughter of Henry the Second, together with the principal ladies of the court, filled the parts[y]. In 1571, at the festival of Nogent le Roi, where every species of diversion was exhibited, and where Charles the Ninth was present, it is expressly stated that a comedy was played by the King's comedians.[z]

A circumstance which may appear singular, is that the Hugonots, during the fury of the civil wars, had recourse to dramatic amusements, calculated to awaken and to sustain religious enthusiasm. In this feature of their character, they seem to have been more liberal than either the English Puritans, or the Scottish Reformers of the sixteenth century, both of whom held in abhorrence all theatrical exhibitions. The Duchess of Rohan composed a tragedy, called "Holophernes," drawn from the history of Judith, contained in the apochryphal writings of Scripture; which piece was represented at Rochelle[a]. In 1569, comedies were played at Niort in Poitou, while the Protestant armies assembled: it may even be doubted whether the loss of the battle of Jarnac in the spring of that year, ought not in some measure to be attributed to the negligence of the Prince of Condé and the other commanders, who per-

Dramatic amusements of the Hugonots.

Comedies.

[y] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 56.

[z] Manuscript de Bethune, N° 8722, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 81.

[a] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 23.

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mitted the royal forces to collect in their neighbourhood, while they were engrossed by theatrical entertainments. Such at least appears to have been the opinion of the King of Navarre [b]. That the dramatic pieces represented before the court of France, were of a nature much too indecent to be exhibited before any modern audience, cannot be doubted, if we peruse the specimen given us by Brantome, of a play which was acted by order of Catherine of Medicis, written by Cornelio Fiasco, a Genoese by birth, captain of a galley. It was composed, indeed, in Italian, but that language was perfectly familiar to the audience. The comedies of Mrs. Behn, under Charles the Second, pieces so licentious, that Pope, when characterizing their author, says,

Indecency of the theatrical representations.

> "The stage how loosely does Astræa tread,
> "Who fairly puts all characters to bed!"

are the only productions among us, which can convey an adequate idea of Fiasco's composition [c]. Political transactions were likewise frequently brought on the stage, under the disguise of Pantomime, and presented with little refinement of conception or action. In 1579, upon the reconciliation of the Walloon provinces of Flanders with Philip the Second, that event was grossly figured by the emblematical appearance of a cow, in one of the comic entertain-

Pantomimes.

[b] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 250.
[c] Brantome, vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 328.

ments

ments exhibited at Paris. The King of Spain conducted the animal by a very slight string, which, as often as it broke, was mended by the Prince of Parma. Elizabeth, Queen of England, the Duke of Anjou, the Prince of Orange, and many other personages, approached with design to liberate the cow; but she rudely repulsed them, and after many gambols, quietly delivered herself up to the Spanish monarch [d]. The application was obvious, and the piece met with great applause.

Rage for romances.

Notwithstanding the favorable reception given to dramatic compositions, the predominant taste of the age was not directed towards the theatre. The national enthusiasm became awakened and concentered in the study of romances; and it is not easy for us to conceive the passionate admiration, with which that species of writing was received among every rank of people. To the heated and eccentric imaginations of the Spaniards, was due the famous romance of "Amadis," which soon afterwards appeared in a French translation, dedicated to Francis the First [e]. Its vogue continued unabated, during that, and the succeeding reign; nor did it subside, till Cervantés held up Knight Errantry to ridicule, in the person of Don Quixote. When we reflect that these unnatural productions were filled with passionate declarations of love, with magicians, warriors, enchantments, battles, and marvellous adventures of a thousand kinds;

Amadis.

Nature of those productions.

[d] Strada, de Bello Belg. vol. iii. p. 93 and 94.
[e] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recher. p. 24. La Noue, p. 134.

we

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we shall not wonder at the fondness manifested for them by the French. All the predominant vices or follies of the times, were in fact artfully flattered in the romance of "Amadis of Gaul." Judicial combats, duels, tournaments, amours, and magic, constituted the pursuits of the courtiers; who saw themselves agreeably reflected in the most polished, as well as flattering mirror. La Noue attributes to the rage for romances, many of the crimes and impieties which distinguished the two last reigns of the princes of Valois.[f]

Education.

The difference which existed in the education of youth under Francis the First, and under Henry the Third, may likewise account in a considerable degree, for the augmenting depravity of manners between those two periods. We may judge of the severity and simplicity of the former time, from the curious relation which De Mesmes has left us, in the discourse upon his own life; where we see the exact detail of the studies pursued by young men of condition in 1545, towards the conclusion of Francis's reign. "I was sent," says he, "in "that year, to Toulouse, being fourteen years "of age, to study the laws, with my preceptor "and my brother, under the superintendance "of an antient gentleman, grey-headed, and "who had long wandered through the world. "We were during three years, auditors; leading a much stricter life, and studying more "severely, than persons of the present time

Mode of education under Francis the First.

[f] La Noue, sixieme Disc. p. 133—146.

"would

"would support. We rose at four o'clock "in the morning, and having addressed our "prayers to God, began our studies at five; "our great books under our arms, our ink- "stands and candlesticks in our hands. We "listened to all the lectures till ten o'clock, "without intermission; and then dined, after "having in haste run over for half an hour, "the substance of the lectures which we had "taken down in writing. After dinner, as "a matter of amusement, we read Sophocles, "or Aristophanes, or Euripides; and some- "times, Demosthenes, Cicero, Virgil, and Ho- "race. At one o'clock, to our studies again; "at five, home to repeat, and look out in "our books, for the passages cited, till after "six. Then we supped, and read in Greek or "Latin. On holy-days, we went to high mass "and vespers: during the remainder of the "day, a little music and walking[g]." But, the strictness of scholastic and collegiate discipline had disappeared, with many others of the characteristic virtues of the age of Francis the First, after the commencement of the civil wars. Profligacy, corruption, and debauchery, all which infected the asylums of learning, rendered the youth indolent or dissolute[h]. Masters or preceptors of ability became rare, and almost all those who excelled in teaching

Change under Henry the Third.

[g] Discours d'Henry de Mesmes, preserved in Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 775.

[h] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 11 and 14. La Noue, cinq. Disc. p. 119 and p. 122 and p. 125.

bodily

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bodily exercises, were procured from Italy[i]. Numbers of young men of family, from these causes, were annually sent into foreign countries, as affording superior advantages and facilities of improvement. Between three and four hundred youths were supposed to quit France every year, to receive their education abroad; of whom more than half perished by diseases or in duels[k]. The most celebrated seminary in the kingdom, was the college of Navarre at Paris, during the greater part of the sixteenth century. Henry the Third, Henry the Fourth, Charles, Duke of Mayenne, his brother Louis, Cardinal of Guise, as well as almost all the children of the highest quality, received the first rudiments of polite knowledge and letters, at that school.[l]

College of Navarre.

College of Guienne.

The youth of the southern provinces were chiefly educated in the college of Guienne at Bourdeaux, of which Montaigne speaks as the most frequented, and best regulated establishment in France. Andrew Govea, the principal, a man of uncommon abilities and learning, flourished under Francis the First. He was a native, not of France, but of Portugal, and quitted Bourdeaux in 1547, to revisit Lisbon, by order of his sovereign John the Third, who placed him in a conspicuous situation at Coimbra, where that Prince founded a university. Buchanan accompanied Govea from the banks

[i] La Noue, p. 129. [k] Ibid. p. 126.

[l] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 129. Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 6 and p. 36.

of

of the Garonne, to those of the Mondego. The tragedies of Buchanan composed in Latin, justly regarded as productions of taste and genius, were frequently performed by the students of Bourdeaux. Montaigne tells us, that he had himself filled many of the characters. We may see in his beautiful and masterly essay, "De l'Institution des Enfans," addressed to Diana of Foix, the nature, genius, and mode, as well as all the characteristic vices or defects, of the system of education, commonly adopted towards the conclusion of the sixteenth century. There is not any essay of that amusing and philosophic writer, which conveys a higher idea of the enlargement of his mind, his knowledge of man, and his superiority to the prejudices and errors of the age in which he flourished. [m]

Effect of the civil wars, on learning and the arts,

It may however be confidently asserted that the civil wars, which desolated the kingdom for above thirty years, proved not more injurious to the morals and general felicity of the people, than they operated to impede learning, and the progress of the arts. The corrupt manners of Catherine of Medicis, the persecutions and massacres caused by the antipathy of the two religions, together with the ferocity produced by scenes of insurrection and bloodshed; — these causes, while they checked the growth of literature, debased the taste of the nation, and in some measure plunged the country anew into barbarism. The same causes have pro-

[m] Essays de Montaigne, vol. i. p. 204—262 chap. xxv.

duced

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duced corresponding effects in the present times. France, desolated by anarchy and carnage since 1789, or compressed under the most degrading, as well as sanguinary tyranny which Europe ever witnessed, has undergone a national, intellectual, and moral deterioration. The military art alone has advanced, while all the other exertions of the human mind have been checked, or weakened, or nearly extinguished. Nor can the vices and crimes of Catherine of Medicis, of Charles the Ninth, or of the Guises, on an impartial estimate, suffer any comparison with the atrocities and turpitudes of the Duke of Orleans, of Robespierre, and of Bonaparte. From the time of Henry the Second's death in 1559, down to the peace of Vervins in 1598, including nearly forty years, France cannot be said to have enjoyed any permanent tranquillity. During particular portions of that period, the monarchy itself seemed to be menaced with dissolution. Far from wondering that science and the fine arts were not more diffused, it may rather excite astonishment that in a time so calamitous, we are yet presented with many shining models of genius, in almost every branch of literature.

in the sixteenth, and the nineteenth centuries.

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State of society and manners.—Picture of the court, under Francis the First. — Decline of its splendor, under the last Princes of Valois. — Orders of knighthood. — Institution of the order of the Holy Ghost. — Officers, and ceremonial of the court. — Palaces. — Castles of the nobility. — Dress. — Luxury of the table. — Furniture. — Carriages. — Litters. — Horses. — Pages. — Lacqueys. — Buffoons.

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State of society and manners.

AFTER having considered the French people under so many different aspects, it is still indispensable in order to complete the picture, that we should take a survey of the national manners. Man in a state of society, becomes more forcibly distinguished and characterized by the modes, usages, and customs universally received, than by any civil, military, or political regulations. To the empire of the former, his submission may be termed in a great degree voluntary: to the latter, it is constrained and compulsory. The features of the nation during the period under our immediate review, were uncommonly bold and prominent. A long period of intestine dissention, approaching to anarchy, had liberated the subject from almost all restraint; while it let loose those destructive passions, which under a well-ordered government, are repressed by the vigilance of the civil magistrate, and the terror of punishment. The royal authority was become con-

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General dissolution of manners.

temptible, the laws were destitute of vigor, and the facility of committing crimes, was equalled by their impunity. All the majesty which surrounded the throne under Francis the First and under Henry the Second, had gradually disappeared under the three succeeding princes; and while luxury diffused itself among the inferior orders, the splendor of the sovereign became diminished, or suffered a total eclipse.

Court of France, under Francis the First,

The French court, previous to the decease of Louis the Twelfth in 1515, like the nation itself, remained rude and unpolished. It was his successor, the young Count of Angouleme, become King by the title of Francis the First, who introduced into it a magnificence antecedently unknown in Europe. Ladies, released from the dungeons or castles, in which their husbands and fathers had immured them from the world; Cardinals, bishops, and prelates, liberated from the superintendance of their dioceses; men of letters, magistrates, together with a vast train of nobility and gentry, summoned, or invited to the presence of the sovereign; crowded to pay their homage to a Prince, who was so well able to appreciate, and to cherish or recompence, every species of merit[a]. Manners may be said to have gained as much, as morals became perverted and corrupted by the change. The King himself, while he protected letters, and introduced the arts into his dominions, gave by his licentious conduct, a mortal wound to the chastity, fidelity,

[a] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 281.

and

CHAP. V. 1754—1589. and Henry the Second.

and virtue of the female sex: his son Henry the Second, too closely imitated the example. But those monarchs, respected by their courtiers, obeyed by their subjects, and undisturbed in a great measure by civil commotions; maintained a becoming dignity even in their vices, and were careful to veil from popular inspection, the pleasures or debaucheries of the palace. Their successors, young, inexperienced, oppressed by misfortunes, plundered of their revenues, compelled to purchase the loyalty and obedience of their servants, or prodigal of their treasures; were no longer able to sustain the preceding splendor and grandeur of the crown. At the close of Henry the Third's reign, scarcely any traces of the magnificence of his grandfather's court, were to be discovered; the universal disorder of the times levelling in a considerable degree, the external distinction between the monarch and the subject.

Change, under the last Princes of Valois.

We may judge how gross and indecorous were the manners of the fifteenth century, when we know that the kings of France admitted in their train, a certain number of women of pleasure, who followed the court wherever it moved in its progress from one royal castle to another, along the banks of the Loire. Quarters were regularly assigned to them, and justice was administered by an officer, exclusively appointed to that employment [b]. Women of honor and quality were unknown about the persons or the

Introduction of ladies.

[b] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 282 and 283.

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residence of Charles the Seventh, and Louis the Eleventh, both of whom retained their queens in a species of imprisonment or of seclusion. Anne of Bretagne, herself a sovereign princess by birth, successively married to Charles the Eighth, and to Louis the Twelfth, first began to assemble a select band of ladies, whom she retained near her, and whose conduct she vigilantly superintended: but, that assembly of persons of both sexes, held in the presence of the sovereign, and denominated in modern language a drawing-room, originated with Francis the First. Every species of luxury in dress, tables, and furniture, soon followed this institution. It may excite some surprize to find, that on occasion of marriages, Francis was accustomed to present dresses to the favourite ladies of his court, the materials of which were of the most costly kind [c]. But, in no article was so much expence incurred, and such magnificence displayed, as in the provision made for the royal household. Not only the table of the sovereign, but those of all the greater and lesser officers of state, who were extremely numerous, were served with the utmost profusion and delicacy. Nor was it merely confined to the residence of the court, when stationary in the capital. Wherever Francis moved, even in the midst of woods, or in the poorest villages, the same plenty was visible around him [d]. The strongest testimony to the splendid hospitality of that monarch, was

Magnificence.

[c] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 270. [d] Ibid. p. 271 and 272.

borne

borne by the Emperor Charles the Fifth himself, during his visit in 1539, when on his way across France to Ghent. Having heard from the Duke of Alva, how admirably the Constable Montmorenci's table was covered, he determined to satisfy himself of the truth of the report. Disappearing therefore unexpectedly, at the hour of dinner, he placed himself, uninvited, as a private guest, at the Constable's side. His amazement was extreme, at finding the fact exceed the account which he had received from common fame. [e]

Hospitality.

Besides the immediate officers of the household, the court of Francis was crouded with prelates and dignified ecclesiastics, who expended the revenues of their sees or benefices, in regaling the more needy courtiers and gentlemen. Above twenty members of the sacred college, among whom were many foreigners, frequently resided at the same time, in the metropolis; and even the Roman pontiffs themselves could rarely boast of so numerous an assemblage of Cardinals [f]. Scarcely any diminution of the magnificence or hospitality of the French Kings, was visible before the accession of Charles the Ninth. Henry the Second maintained his father's institutions, and succeeded to his favorite propensities. Catherine of Medicis at every period of her life, emulating the praise of munificence, a quality hereditary in her family, rendered her palace

Splendor of the court, under Francis the First.

[e] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 273 and 274.
[f] Ibid. p. 286—288.

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the scene of festivity, gallantry, and pleasure[g]. But, the beginning of the civil wars, formed the term of its duration; and whatever efforts might be exerted on particular occasions, the dilapidation of the finances affixed insurmountable obstacles to the support of the antient state and majesty of the crown. Retrenchments of every kind were made in the royal expence; and far from being in a condition to maintain the hospitality or splendor of Francis the First, it was often found difficult under Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, to provide for the personal, or most necessary expenditures of the King. Brantome draws a feeling picture of their distress, rendered if possible more poignant, by the comparison with preceding times[h]. It attained, like every other national misfortune, to its highest point, during the reign of the last prince of the house of Valois. The garrison of Metz, one of the most important frontier cities of the kingdom, acquired by Henry the Second, and defended by Francis, Duke of Guise, against all the efforts of Charles the Fifth; being left for several months without pay, was driven by necessity into a state of mutiny and revolt[i]. Such was the poverty of the court in November, 1574, only three months after Henry's return to France from Poland, that on the journey between Lyons and Avignon, the

Its decline, after the commencement of the civil wars.

Poverty under Henry the Third.

[g] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 42—50.
[h] Ibid. vol. i. p. 275 and 276.
[i] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 249.

greater

greater number of the royal pages were necessitated to leave their cloaks behind as pledges, in order to procure bread. No salaries or appointments, continued to be paid; and if one of the farmers or treasurers of the revenue, had not assisted the Queen-mother by a loan of about two hundred pounds, she would have remained unaccompanied by a single lady of any description.[k] CHAP. V. 1574—1589.

It affords at once a curious proof of the poverty of the crown, and of the difficulty of raising supplies, to find that only about two years afterwards, a proposition was seriously agitated in council, by Catherine of Medicis, to apply to Muley Muloc, King of Fez, for a loan of money. If we did not know the fact from a person who was present at its discussion, and whose veracity is indisputable, we might justly call it in question. "On the "7th of February, 1577," says the Duke of Nevers in his Memoirs, "the Queen-mother "proposed to dispatch the Abbé Guadagni to "the King of Fez, to borrow two millions of "gold." She likewise meant, it appears, to authorize the envoy to open a commercial treaty with Fez and Morocco, which she conceived, might prove equally beneficial to the Moors, and to the French. Hopes were entertained that the Abbé might return with a favorable answer from the Mahometan prince, in two months. The treasures of that monarch Expedient of Catherine of Medicis.

[k] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 47.

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were estimated to exceed two millions and a half sterling. It is nevertheless difficult to say by what arguments he could be induced to lend any part of it to Henry the Third, unless advantages in trade were held out to him. So wild and chimerical a proposition does not seem to have been prosecuted, or adopted by the ministers.[l]

Army unpaid,

In the same year, we find that the King was unable to pay even his embassador at the court of Elizabeth, Queen of England; or to continue the usual stipends which he was accustomed to allow to various persons, from whom he received intelligence of the motions and designs of that Princess[m]. The army stood in the same predicament; and Sancy, who in 1589 raised a body of Switzers for his master, was reduced, after mortgaging the most valuable diamonds of the crown, to pledge his own patrimonial estates and property for their support[n]. Without the pecuniary assistance of Ferdinand, great Duke of Tuscany, and of the Canton of Bern, the troops could neither have been subsisted, nor induced to march into France. The guards themselves were left unpaid; and a circumstance almost incredible is, that the archers who protected the person of Henry at Blois, applied to the Duke of Guise, on the very morning of his assassination, imploring him to interest himself

and the guards.

[l] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 171.

[m] Letters 71 and 72, in Le Lab. sur. Cast. vol. iii. p. 508—510. Lettres de Foix, p. 258.

[n] De Thou, vol. x. p. 647.

in

in their behalf, as they must otherwise be necessitated to sell their horses, and return to their respective abodes[o]. Similar distress had manifested itself in the household, and among the troops of the Duke of Anjou. In 1582, the unfortunate soldiers who had followed that Prince's fortune into Flanders, were abandoned to such penury, as to solicit alms for their subsistence.[p]

Institution of the order of the Holy Ghost.

In the midst nevertheless of these accumulated and humiliating extremities, Henry the Third, whose passion for expence and ceremonies could not be controlled by any reflexions on his situation, or on the state of the finances, instituted the order of knighthood of the Holy Ghost. It was designed to replace that of St. Michael, created by Louis the Eleventh in the preceding century, which had been prostituted during the civil wars, in such a manner as to render it contemptible[q]. The institutions of chivalry, so elevated, romantic, and captivating, may be said to have expired in a great measure with Henry the Second. He was the last French monarch who received from the hands of a subject, the military honor of knighthood. Marshal Biéz conferred it on him, as the renowned Chevalier Bayard had knighted Francis the First, before the battle of Marignan[r]. We may judge how low the order of St. Michael was sunk in the general estimation, from the terms in which it is men-

State of the order of St. Michael.

[o] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 106.
[p] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 645.
[q] Ibid. p. 73.
[r] Brantome, Les Duels, p. 304.

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tioned by the Viscount de Tavannes. "I "have always disdained it," says he, "and "repeatedly declined to accept it. In my "own company, I have often had three "knights of the order; and in my father Marshal Tavannes' coffers, I found half a dozen "blank patents, to be given to whomsoever I "should please[s]." Many persons, after having received it, laid it by, and concealed the honor. "Above a hundred gentlemen," says La Noue, "finding the expence and stile "of living inseparable from the distinction, "not only inconvenient, but ruinous, have "chosen to lock up the Insignia of so pernicious a dignity[t]." It was distributed to such numbers, as to be denominated in derision, "Le Colliér a toutes Bêtes."[u]

Its degradation.

Motives for the creation of the order of the Holy Ghost.

Conscious of this degradation, Henry the Third instituted the order of the Holy Ghost, on the last day of December, 1578. It was composed of only one hundred knights, at its commencement; and the King projected to confer on each of them, four hundred crowns annual pension, taken from the revenues of the richest abbeys of his dominions. But, as the Papal consent became requisite, in order to make so material an invasion of the ecclesiastical property; and as the clergy opposed it in the court of Rome, the intention remained in-

[s] Tavannes, p. 179. [t] La Noue, p. 169.
[u] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 103. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 356.

com-

complete[x]. Another object proposed by its founder, was to attach the members of the new order, more strictly to himself; and thus to form by its means, a counterpoise to the strength of the adherents of "the League." But he soon discovered how frail was the obligation of oaths, when counteracted by ambition. The order of the Holy Ghost did not long remain confined to the original number of a hundred. Having been conferred indiscriminately, it speedily incurred the same reproaches and contempt, which had been previously lavished on that of St. Michael.[y]

Its prostitution.

A similar increase and prostitution of all the dignities or honors of the crown, military as well as civil, characterized the reign of Henry the Third. Gentlemen of the bed-chamber, esquires, and colonels, were augmented in a proportion with the other attendants of the court[z]. "Monsieur d'Esse," says Brantome, "was made for his services in defending Landrecy against the Emperor, a gentleman of "the bed-chamber to Henry the Second, which "was then a great and honorable employment. They served only six months, and "received twelve hundred Livres," (or about fifty pounds,) "of salary[a]." Under his sons, when the title was multiplied, the appointments were withheld.

Multiplication of offices and dignities.

The establishment of the Duke of Anjou's household in 1576, of which a most accurate

Household of the Duke of Anjou.

[x] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 73 and 74. Tavannes, ibid.
[y] Brant. Les Duels, p. 290. [z] La Noue, p. 169.
[a] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 180.

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account is preserved in the Duke of Nevers's Memoirs; seems to have been more splendid and expensive, if the comparative value of money be considered, than the household of any prince of the family of Bourbon, previous to the late Revolution. It must however be recollected that he was the King's only brother, and presumptive heir to the crown. The aggregate annual amount of the appointments to all the officers and attendants, is no less than two hundred and sixty-three thousand, seven hundred and ten Livres[b]. It is difficult to estimate the relative value of that sum, at the distance of near two centuries and a half, in English money; but perhaps we shall not rate it too high, when we suppose that it was in fact equal at least to ninety thousand pounds Sterling at this time. It is extremely curious, while it conveys a high idea of the magnificence of princes in the age under our review, to survey the number of offices, and the salaries respectively annexed to each employment. Much of the genius and temper of the times, may be traced or discovered in them. The Duke had no less than one hundred and six chamberlains, at six hundred Livres, or about twenty-five pounds each; besides one hundred and forty-eight gentlemen of the bed-chamber, whose salaries varied, from two hundred, to five hundred Livres. There are fifteen almoners, seven chaplains, as many clerks of the chapel,

Offices and appointments.

[b] About eleven thousand pounds.

and

and one preacher. Their appointments in general do not exceed two hundred, to three hundred Livres; and some fall as low as a hundred Sous, or fifty pence. To the office of superintendant of the household, are annexed four thousand Livres, or near a hundred and eighty pounds. The Duke has sixteen physicians, whose salaries gradually diminish, from six hundred, down to ten Livres. The surgeons are eleven in number, and their appointments are exactly similar, being each a hundred and eighty Livres. There is only one apothecary, with four hundred Livres salary. He has forty-six valets de chambre, and forty-one valets of the wardrobe, whose salaries are in general about two hundred Livres. The first valet has eight hundred. It is amusing to see that he has five barbers, who receive the same pay as the surgeons, except the first, who is termed barber in ordinary, and has three hundred Livres. Paré, in all his writings, seems to consider physicians, surgeons, and barbers, as exercising different branches of the same profession of healing. He couples them together, and regards them as disciples or followers of one common master, Esculapius[c]. There are among the inferior officers, four tapestry hangers, and two helpers; clockmakers, embroiderers, and mercers. The council is very numerous, but in general, the office seems to have been little more than honorary and titu-

Enumeration of them.

[c] Œuvres de Paré, p. 568.

lar;

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lar: the emolument is small. To the chancellor, four thousand Livres. There are no less than one hundred and eleven secretaries; and the concluding name in the list is the Duke's nurse, with a salary of about eighteen pounds. [d]

However splendid this establishment appears on paper, it was far otherwise in reality. The Duke, in his last will, dated the 8th of June, 1584, at Chateau Thierry on the Marne, in Champagne, owns with concern and expressions of the deepest distress, that the greater part of his officers and servants were unpaid. He pathetically and earnestly recommends them to the King his brother's pity or bounty, declaring that he is besides indebted to various individuals, in a sum not less than one hundred and fifty thousand crowns. [e]

Creation of a Colonel-general of the infantry.

A military creation which excited universal clamour, while it fully exposed the unbounded partiality of Henry the Third towards Epernon, was the office of Colonel-general of France. Henry, unable to induce the Duke of Guise to lay down, or to sell on any conditions, his post of lord-steward of the household, erected a new charge for his favorite. The employment of Colonel-general of the infantry, was declared to be henceforward an office, not of the King, but of the crown of France. Prerogatives, little short of royal, were annexed to it. The power of filling up, and of naming to all

[d] Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 577—599.
[e] Ibid. p. 601—603.

vacant

vacant commissions in the infantry without reserve, was added to the right of judging definitively all causes which respected the life or honor of the troops, before a tribunal composed of his own officers, in which he presided [f]. It may be justly questioned, whether powers so vast were ever entrusted to any subject; and they degraded the sovereign who conferred them, in the same proportion that they elevated the object of his favor. In 1586, the post of grand-master of the ceremonies, unknown before that period, was instituted by the same Prince [g]. About two years earlier, he had the weakness, in consequence of a conversation which took place between him and the English embassadress at Paris, to issue a regulation respecting the ceremonial of the court. It is a curious fact, that the forms observed in approaching and serving Elizabeth, Queen of England, as well as all her predecessors in the sixteenth century, were more befitting an arbitrary monarch, than those used in France. Henry, anxious to imitate or exceed the English Princess, in exacting marks of submission from his courtiers and ministers, published an injunction, specifying in the most minute detail, the hours, dress, and formalities, indispensable for all who wished to obtain audience, or to transact business [h]. They were received with disdain, by the nation; and only served to ren-

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Ceremonial of the court.

[f] Vie d' Epernon, vol. i. p. 100—102. De Thou, vol. ix. p. 202.
[g] L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 659.
[h] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 202 and 203.

der

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der more contemptible a sovereign, who while he was occupied with empty ceremonies, had squandered the revenues, diminished the power, and degraded the majesty of the throne. At the close of the reign of Francis the First, there existed no peers in the kingdom, except the princes of the royal blood, and the collateral descendants of some sovereign houses, who were settled in France. The titles of *Duke*, *Count*, and *Marquis*, constituted only simple gradations and ranks of nobility. The first subject ever raised to the peerage, was the Constable Montmorenci, by Henry the Second. Under Charles the Ninth, it became more common: his brother, when he elevated to that dignity, his two minions, Joyeuse and Epernon, gave them precedence above every other gentleman, though of prior creation. [i]

Creation of peers.

Construction and mode of building.

With Francis the First, magnificence and convenience in the style of constructing houses of every description, began to be known among the French. The castles of Plessiz les Tours, Amboise, and Blois, in which resided principally his immediate predecessors, were insulated and almost inaccessible fastnesses overhanging the Loire, more calculated for defence against enemies, than becoming the majesty of a great monarch in time of peace. Chambord and Fontainbleau formed the first palaces, properly so denominated, that Europe had beheld beyond the Alps, since the destruction of the Roman

Improvements, introduced by Francis the First.

[i] Memoire au Depôt de Bethune, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 94.

empire[k]. Neither strength nor safety constituted their characteristic: they retained indeed the moat, and the castellated appearance; more however in compliance with the established mode, than from any other cause. Pavilions, groves, statues; together with all the ornaments of a softened and cultivated taste, were to be found in the residence of Francis. The example spread with rapidity, among the great nobilty. Ecouën and Chantilly, both constructed by the Constable Montmorenci, were palaces of pleasure, not fortresses, though they still presented a frowning and embattled mien. The antient dungeons and turrets, in which the gentlemen and Barons had immured themselves during so many ages, began to be re-edified on principles of a more splendid, or convenient architecture[l]. We may judge from the description of Meudon, and of St. Maur des Fossés, (the Villas of the Cardinals of Lorrain, and of Du Bellai, in the vicinity of Paris,) which are to be found in the epistles of L'Hopital, how great a progress the art of embellishing a seat had already made, before the middle of the sixteenth century. Plantations, grottos, terraces, and gardens, adorned with antique busts and statues brought from Rome, were to be found in the voluptuous retreats of those prelates.[m]

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Elegance of palaces.

It is not however by any means to be understood, that the nobility in general resembled

Castles of the nobility.

[k] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 277—279.
[l] La Noue, p. 164—167.
[m] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. p. 17—19, and p. 83—85.

them;

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them; or that castles in the most literal acceptation of the term, ceased to be maintained and inhabited by the gentry. For a long time subsequent to the period under our examination, the draw-bridges were regularly raised every evening, and only lowered in the morning, with a view to receive the necessary supplies of provisions brought by the peasants for sale. It became requisite to besiege a refractory or rebellious gentleman, who from the battlements of his castle defied the sovereign himself, and often maintained an obstinate conflict against the forces of the crown[n]. Henry the Third appears to have been so convinced of the magnitude of the evil, and so desirous of stopping or controlling its further progress, that in 1579 he expressly enjoined the commissioners, who were sent to enquire into abuses throughout the provinces, to render it an object of their peculiar attention. "You will make "diligent search," says he, "after those who "have fortified, or may hereafter fortify their "houses with ditches, towers, bastions, or other "works, without having obtained our permis-"sion, or that of our predecessors[o]." How numerous were these castles, and embattled or castellated mansions, we may judge, when we find that in 1588, the Duke of Nevers, who commanded the royal forces, made himself master of thirty-six, only in Lower Poitou, within the space of a few weeks[p]. They constituted the

Their numbers.

[n] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 601.

[o] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p 607. [p] Ibid. p. 875 and 877.

recep-

receptacles and asylums of petty despots, who insulted the crown, while they plundered the miserable peasants of the surrounding country.

Dress, which forms perhaps the strongest and most interesting feature, by which national manners are characterised, was carried, like every other article of expence or taste, to a pitch of almost unlimited extravagance under Henry the Third. The rapidity and fluctuation of fashion, kept pace with the costly nature of the materials. Such was the general demand for gold and silver stuffs or brocades, that the effect was sensibly felt, by the diminution of the quantity of specie in circulation throughout the kingdom [q]. In 1571, at the entertainment of Nogent, given in honor of the Duchess of Bouillon, the King, Charles the Ninth, his two brothers, and the Duke of Lorrain, were all dressed in the same manner; their habits being composed of silver stuff, with an embroidery of pearls, edged with gold [r]. "Formerly," says La Noue, "it was usual to wear the same dress "for a considerable time; but at present we "may pronounce, that among the courtiers, "their ordinary duration does not exceed three "months, for a common suit; for a more ex- "pensive one, six months; and among the "other nobility, somewhat longer [s]." "Such "has been the depravity of the age," adds he in another place, "that our pages and lacqueys

Splendor of dress.

Rapidity of fashion.

[q] L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 659.

[r] Manusc. de Bethune, in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 81.

[s] La Noue, p. 163.

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Progress of luxury.

"have been habited in silver stuffs[t]." All distinctive marks, by which the different orders of society might be distinguished, seem in a great measure to have been broken down under Henry the Third. "A cobler," says La Noue, "who has followed arms for a couple of "years, will wear a gilt sword, which our an- "cestors would scruple to have done, unless "they had received the honor of knighthood: "he will put on silk stockings; a piece of ele- "gance which Henry the Second never knew "during his whole life[u]." It is hardly possible to mark the progress of luxury, in more expressive terms. At the nuptials of the Duke of Joyeuse in 1581, when the festivities and entertainments lasted seventeen days, during which the habits worn were expensive as well as splendid beyond description; all the noblemen and ladies who were invited, changed their dress every day, by the King's express command.[x]

The hat, and turban.

The hat, decorated with feathers and precious stones, worn by Francis the First, became converted into a bonnet or cap, by Henry the Second, and his two successors. Henry the Third substituted in its place, the Italian "Toque," or turban; not only as being an effeminate ornament, but with the view of more effectually concealing his want of hair[y]. It was composed of velvet, adorned with jewels, and fastened or bound over one ear, leaving

[t] La Noue, p.162.
[u] Ibid. p.194.
[x] L'Etoile, p.45.
[y] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p.272.

the

the other exposed, in which hung a pearl or diamond[z]. When Sully was sent by the King of Navarre in 1587, to treat with that infatuated and dissolute prince, he was presented by Villeroy to him, at St. Maur, near Paris. "I found him," says Sully, "in his "closet, a sword by his side, a short cloak on "his shoulders, his little turban on his head; "and about his neck, in form of a scarf, was "hung a basket, such as the venders of cheese "use, in which there were two or three little "dogs, not larger than my fist[a]." It may be curious to oppose to this portrait of Henry the Third, the description which a writer of equal veracity has left us, of the King of Navarre, as he appeared at the memorable interview of Plessiz les Tours, in April, 1589. It stands singularly contrasted with the preceding picture. "He passed the river Loire," says Cayet, "at the head of his guards. Of the whole "troop, not one, except himself, had either a "cloak, or a plume. All wore white scarfs. "The King was clothed like a soldier; his "doublet worn away over the shoulders, and "on the sides, with the perpetual use of a "cuirass. His loose breeches were of fillamot "velvet; his cloak, scarlet. He had on a grey "hat, ornamented with a large white plume, "and a very handsome medal."[b]

Dress of Henry the Third,

and of the King of Navarre

[z] L'Art. de Verif. vol. i. p. 659.
[a] Sully, vol. i. p. 48.
[b] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 185.

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Ruffs.

During the reigns of Francis the Second and Charles the Ninth, ruffs, curiously plaited, became universally fashionable. Every gentleman wore them; and the men of dress took great pains, and passed much time, in adjusting them with elegance. "After the action near "Perigueux in 1568, where the Hugonots were "defeated," says Brantome, "the body of "their leader, Pierregourde, was discovered: "he had on a clean, white shirt; but above "all a very handsome ruff, most delicately "crimped and plaited, as they were then "worn[c]." Soon after his accession, in 1575, Henry the Third quitted the mode, of which he had previously been extravagantly fond; and adopted in its place the little Italian bands or collars, turned down on the neck[d]. How general was the use of ear-rings among the men, we may collect from D'Aubigné; who says that when the Hugonots in 1568, made a collection for paying the German auxiliary army, the pages and lacqueys tore their pendants out of their ears, in their anxiety to contribute towards the general supply[e]. Henry the Third himself usually wore ear-rings; and among the many marks of indecent or unmanly fondness, with which he bewailed the death of Quelus, one of his minions, killed in a duel, he took out of that favorite's ears the

Bands.

Ear-rings.

[c] Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 194.
[d] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 59.
[e] D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. i. p. 228.

pendants

pendants which he had previously fixed in them with his own hands.[f]

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Gold chains.

Gold chains formed rather an honorary mark of distinction, than an ordinary appendage of dress. Sovereigns and great personages often conferred them for eminent services, or presented them to embassadors and foreign ministers. It was accounted a display of magnificence in the famous Constable of Bourbon, which excited the envy of Francis the First; that at the ceremony of his son's baptism, to which the King was invited, Bourbon had five hundred gentlemen his retainers present, every one of whom wore a triple chain of gold round his neck[g]. The Swiss deputies, twenty-six in number, who came to Paris in 1583, to renew the stipendiary treaty with the Crown of France, received from Henry the Third, before their departure, each a gold collar, valued at two hundred and fifty crowns[h]. In 1568, Louis, Prince of Condé, delighted with the valor of Schomberg, who had attacked and dislodged some of the Italian soldiery in the service of Charles the Ninth; and unable otherwise to express his sense of the courage displayed in the action, put round the neck of Schomberg, at the head of the army, a gold chain worth a hundred crowns[i]. It is nevertheless evident that so honourable a testimony of merit, or

Honorary marks.

[f] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 92. Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 171.

[g] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Etran. p. 245.

[h] Busbeq. letter 12, p. 74.

[i] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 228 and 229.

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mark of distinction, was sometimes prostituted and degraded, by conferring it on improper subjects. We find Henry the Second, at the peace of Cateau, made between France and Spain in 1559, presenting to the buffoon of Philip the Second, a gold chain of considerable value. [k]

Arts of luxury.

In a court so voluptuous as that of Catherine of Medicis, where pleasure was usually rendered the veil or vehicle of policy, it may be naturally supposed, that all the arts of luxury and elegance had made a progress not less universal among the females, than in the other sex. Marriage portions, before the extinction of the family of Valois, were already increased among the opulent part of the inhabitants of Paris, to such a point, that a young woman was not esteemed an object of interested attention, unless she possessed at least from four hundred, to five hundred pounds sterling in ready money, and full twenty pounds of annual rent. This fact would appear incredible, or at least exaggerated, if it was not asserted as notorious and incontrovertible, by a contemporary author of credit [l]. We may trace in Brantome, who had passed his life in the court of the three last Princes of Valois, the gradual refinement, progressive expence, and augmenting profusion of ornament, by which the ladies were distinguished. Margaret, Queen of Navarre, a Princess eminent for the beauty of her person, as much as for the depravity and libertinism of

[k] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 293.
[l] Satyre Menip. vol. iii. p. 198, 199.

her

her manners, influenced greatly by her example, on the dress and modes of the period. We find her attired or decorated with almost all the attributes and accompaniments of modern coquetry. False hair, masks, paint, both red and white; fans, black velvet shoes, white slippers pointed at the toe, hair powder, feathers, crape, white silk stockings, ear-rings, pearls, tooth powder, and a variety of subservient articles composing her toilet, leave us no room to doubt of the magnificence of her appearance[m]. Many of these decorations had been recently introduced into France, from Venice and other cities of Italy. As early as 1574, we find Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who well knew all the foibles and weaknesses of his royal mistress, dispatching a gentleman of his household to Paris, in order to bring over false hair and edgings of the newest fashion, for Elizabeth[n]. That capital began already to be regarded as the arbitress of taste and mode.

CHAP. V. 1574—1589. Female ornaments. Modes.

Masks for the concealment of the face, became universal among ladies of every rank, under the reign of Charles the Ninth: they were particularly worn while travelling, in order to prevent the injuries inflicted by the air and sun[o]. Margaret of Valois, on her two jour-

Masks.

[m] Œuvres de St. Gelais, p. 108. Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 380—382, and 396—399; and vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 131 and p. 159. Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 236 and 243 and 284. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 407. Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. viii. liv. i. p. 10, 11. Œuvres de Paré, p. 739—741.

[n] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 407.

[o] Vie de Margue: de Val. p. 236 and p. 343.

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neys to Spa, and to Nerac, the first of which she performed in 1577, and the last in 1583, is constantly masqued [p]. When Henry, Duke of Guise, arrived at Paris in 1588, a young lady, seated in a shop, in one of the principal streets through which he passed, attended by crowds of people; lowering her masque, said to him, "Good Prince, since thou art here, "we are all saved[q]." Sattin was principally used in the dresses of persons of quality of both sexes, or still more frequently, velvet. Charles the Ninth, his brothers, and the King of Navarre, were all habited, at the nuptials of Margaret of Valois in 1572, in uniforms of pale yellow sattin, covered with embroidery in relief, enriched with pearls and precious stones [r]. Some estimate of the enormous expence of female dresses in that age, may be formed from the Queen of Navarre's memoirs, where she informs us that she presented one of her gowns to the Countess of Lalain, at Mons in Hainault. "It was," says she, "of "black sattin, covered with embroidery, which "had cost from four, to five hundred crowns [s]:" a sum almost incredible, if we consider the relative value of money; and much exceeding the most costly gown worn by Queens or Princesses, in the present time.

Sattins.

Female dress.

The petticoat was made very long, so as to conceal the feet entirely in walking: but as a

[p] Mem. de Margue: p.44 and p.129.
[q] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p.244.
[r] Vie de Marg. p.85.
[s] Vie de Marg. p.244. Mem. de Marg. p.136.

sort of compensation for this apparent mark of female modesty, the ladies displayed their necks in an immoderate degree. To Margaret of Valois, was likewise due the introduction of the mode: she even continued to expose that part of her person, at a period of life when it was no longer calculated to excite admiration or desire, in defiance even of the admonitions and reprehensions levelled at her from the pulpit[t]. It excites entertainment to know that inventions for increasing the size of the female figure behind, as well as for augmenting it before; both of which practices have been renewed in the present age; were common under the last princes of Valois. As early as 1563, treatises were written, and satires composed, on the "Basquines," and "Vertugalles;" the two articles of dress destined to the above-mentioned purposes. They were not without reason considered as being subservient to, and productive of great depravity of manners; particularly, from the concealment which they afforded to pregnancy. In 1579, under Henry the Third, the use of them had become so general, that they were commonly called by the name of the part which they covered, or protected. Ladies, before they went out, were accustomed, says a contemporary writer, to call to their maid-servant, "Apportez moi mon cul."[u]

[t] Vie de Marg. p.401.

[u] Biblioth. Exotica, p. 207. H. Etienne, Dialogues, p. 202, 203. Satyre Menip. vol. ii. p. 387, 388.

With

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Pattins.

With a view to increase their height, an object which has always deeply interested the sex, short women used a sort of pattins composed of cork; which, if we may judge by Brantome's account, were equally cumbrous and destitute of grace. However extraordinary or incredible it appears to us, he repeatedly asserts that these pattins raised the person who wore them, near twelve inches from the ground[x]. Perhaps however, posterity may find equal difficulty in believing that during many years of the reign of George the Third, young and beautiful females of the highest rank, who led the mode, and were the arbitresses of fashion, wore head dresses composed of powder, pomatum, pins, gauze, and lace, nearly a foot and a half high; ornamented, or as we should now think, deformed by extraneous appendages of various kinds, from the number of which, even coarse vegetable productions were not excluded. Margaret of Valois, when attired in 1579, could hardly have appeared to us more grotesque, than the late Duchess of Devonshire, one of the most charming women of the last century, would seem to our eyes, if she could be presented before us, as she was decorated for Ranelaugh in 1779, two hundred years after the Queen of Navarre. Such, and so inconceivable are the transmutations of female dress in different ages; and so truly did Ovid observe that

"Pars minima est ipsa puella suæ."

[x] Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 381 and p. 396—399.

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We feel no little surprize, and some degree of ridicule, at reading in so grave an author as Ambrose Paré, at least twenty different receipts or prescriptions, for making white paint, and rouge. The title of the chapter, in which he discloses and details the modes of painting the female face, without injury to the health, is denominated, "Des Fards, pour decorer et embellir la Face des Femmes[y]." He divides them into distinct species, applicable to various purposes; and the finest lady of the present age, might probably find some valuable hints, or make some important accession to her knowledge on this delicate subject, by consulting Paré, who wrote considerably more than two centuries ago. Paint.

Mourning began already to be rendered susceptible of ornament and elegance, under Henry the Third. Widows never appeared in any dress, except white or black; while their petticoats and stockings were scrupulously confined to grey, violet, and blue. Precious stones could only be worn by them on their fingers, and on their girdles; but they might without violation of propriety, substitute pearls on the neck and arms[z]. Females of distinction were accustomed to wear pendants in their ears, made in the shape of human skulls. We find a sonnet of Desportes, addressed to Mademoiselle de Chateauneuf, the celebrated mistress of Henry the Third, on her appearing with Mourning.

[y] Œuvres de Paré, p. 739.

[z] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 131 and 132.

these

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these funereal ornaments[a]. Small ebony, or ivory skulls, strung as a chaplet, and hanging at their waists, were likewise commonly worn by ladies, not only, as it seems, for the loss of their husbands, but for the death of their lovers[b]. The mourning of the kings of France, was always violet. In 1584, contrary to received custom, Henry the Third put on black, in order to express his concern for the decease of his brother, the Duke of Anjou[c]: but he only appeared in violet, when he accompanied the funeral procession of his mother Catherine, four years afterwards, at Blois[d]. It forms a circumstance not unworthy of attention, as it characterizes the age, that green was regarded as the colour of mourning for fools or lunatics. No sooner was intelligence of Henry the Third's death, in consequence of the wound which he had received from Clement, divulged at Paris, on the second of August, 1589, than the people universally put on green, in derision. The Duchess of Montpensier distributed scarfs of the same colour, to all the principal adherents of "the League."[e]

Royal mourning.

Funerals.

Funerals were commonly solemnized with great magnificence. We find Elizabeth, Queen of England, though a Protestant, performing a service for Charles the Ninth, in 1574, with the utmost pomp, in the cathedral of St. Paul,

[a] Œuvres de Desportes, p. 430. [b] Brant. vol. i. p. 148.
[c] Busbequius, letter 38. p. 203. [d] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 124.
[e] Mem. pour. ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 287.

at

at London: all the great nobility attended; the banner of France was displayed, and the Bishop of Hereford made the funeral oration. It is to be presumed, that he took care to omit any mention of, or allusion to, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which had taken place only two years before; and on receiving the intelligence of which atrocious act, the English Princess had manifested the deepest concern, as well as abhorrence. [f]

Luxury of the table.

The luxury of the table kept pace with the elegance of dress, if it did not even exceed the latter, during the period before us; and it is highly probable that the cookery of France, was much more delicate than that of England, or of the northern nations. We find mention made in Brantome, of many culinary articles as being common, which were certainly unknown among the English, under Elizabeth. The most exquisite sauces, meats, and vegetables, seem to have been served at the tables of the great, in the utmost profusion. Sallads, artichokes, asparagus, morelles, truffles, and various other delicacies, continually occur in the pages of that author [g]. The Chancellor l'Hopital, when enumerating the productions of his farm and garden, situate at Vignai near Estampes, between Paris and Orleans, includes among them, beans, peas, and turnips [h]. Orange trees had been brought from the Levant, and were

Vegetables.

[f] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 66 and 67.
[g] Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 268—270.
[h] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. Epitres, p. 109.

success-

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successfully cultivated by the Constable of Bourbon, before 1524, in his gardens at Moulins in the Bourbonnais [i]. The entertainments, as well as the deserts, given by the "Vidame" of Chartres, to Edward the Sixth and his court, when he was sent over as embassador from Henry the Second in 1551, were far more splendid and costly than had ever been seen before in London [k]. On the 26th of January, 1580, Cardinal Birague received Henry the Third, his Queen, together with Catherine of Medicis, attended by a great train of noblemen and ladies, in the gallery of his house at Paris. A collation was there served upon two long tables, consisting of between eleven and twelve hundred dishes, composed of confectionary and dried sweetmeats of various kinds, constructed in the form of castles, pyramids, or other elegant figures [l]. The original estimate of the sum, requisite for maintaining the table of the same Prince, when only Duke of Anjou, and commander in chief of the royal forces before Rochelle in 1573, exceeded two thousand pounds a-month. Marshal Tavannes reduced it however to about four hundred [m]. Even the latter allowance must be considered as very ample in that age. Ronsard, enumerating the fruits common at the tables of the opulent, speaks of peaches, mulberries, apricots,

Banquets.

Fruits.

[i] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 282.
[k] Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 341.
[l] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 112.
[m] Tavannes, p. 448.

pears,

pears, quinces, rasberries, cherries, and strawberries[n]. Few of these delicacies were known, or produced among the English, before the reign of James the First; a period later by near half a century.

Style and expence of tables.

We may see in Busbequius, the diurnal consumption of Don Antonio, titular King of Portugal, in 1583, when residing at Rüel, not far from Paris. "He consumes," says that author, "every day, the fourth part of an ox, two "sheep, and a hundred and fifty loaves." It is to be observed that Antonio was then sinking fast into poverty and oblivion[o]. The Swiss embassadors, who came to ratify the treaty made between the Helvetic Union and Henry the Third, received daily from the corporation of Paris, thirteen Mentz ham pasties, thirty quarts of red and white wine, together with forty wax torches[p]. The usual hour of sitting down to dinner, was eleven o'clock, under Charles the Ninth. Catherine of Medicis, in a long letter addressed by her to that young Prince in 1563, which composition forcibly displays the enlargement of her mind, as well as her knowledge of the arts of reigning; strongly exhorts her son never to dine at a later hour[q]. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, and not easily explained, that Francis of Montmorenci, eldest son of the first Constable of that name, when he was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and confined at Lisle in 1557; writes to his

Hours of dinner.

[n] Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. viii. p. 58.
[o] Busbeq. letter 20. p. 122.
[p] L'Etoile, p. 61.
[q] Le Lab. sur. Cast. vol. ii. p. 451.

father,

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father, informing him, that "his own daily "expences amounted to three half crowns "a-day, as every article of life cost at least "double the price paid for them in France[r]."

Simplicity of L'Hopital.

The Chancellor l'Hopital alone, among the great officers of state, appears to have adhered to the primitive simplicity of earlier times, in the article of his table. Brantome, who had dined with him, expressly says, that only boiled meat was served at it, according to his regular custom[s]. That exemplary magistrate, who emulated the poetic fame of Horace, equally imitated the frugality of the Roman poet. It was always customary to present water to the guests, to wash their hands, before they sat down to table, and again at their rising from it.[t]

Furniture.

Magnificence in furniture seems to have been totally unknown among the French, before the reign of Henry the Second. Marshal St. André, a voluptuous and dissolute nobleman, who acquired an immense property from the favor of that monarch, exhibited the first example of rich furniture, at his castle of Valeri. It was said to exceed in beauty, any thing of the same nature to be found in the royal palaces. Persian carpets wrought with gold, and tapestries of exquisite workmanship, were among the ornamental pieces. He was denominated the Lucullus of France, though the French com-

[r] Depôt de Bethune, N° 8673, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii, Recherches, p. 106.

[s] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 80.

[t] Ibid. p. 283. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 503.

mander

mander fell far below the Roman general in military renown, and could only boast of resembling him in his vices. Francis the First possessed two suits of tapestry, then regarded as the most superb in Europe, and both were of Flemish manufacture. One suit, which represented "the continence of Scipio," on great festivals was used for decorating the principal halls of his palace. "It cost," adds Brantome, "eleven thousand crowns at that time: "at present, I have been assured it could not "be procured for twenty-five thousand, it being entirely composed of gold and silk[u]. The second suit was likewise historical; but, the subject being taken from Holy Scripture, it was appropriated to the royal chapel. As a proof how much more universally commerce had diffused wealth and all the arts of luxury, among the Italians of the same period; Brantome owns that in the house of a private banker at Genoa, he had seen a piece of tapestry, representing the exploits of Achilles before Troy, scarcely inferior in any respect to those possessed by Francis. It was valued by the owner, at the sum of fifteen thousand crowns[x].

CHAP. V. 1574—1589. Tapestries. Their splendor and value.

Margaret of Valois, in her Memoirs, describes the tapestries and the furniture, with which Don John of Austria fitted up the apartments occupied by her while she remained at Namur, in 1577, as infinitely more costly than any that she had ever beheld in France. The

[u] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 271.
[x] Ibid. p. 271 and 272.

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tapestry was composed of velvet or sattin, ornamented with columns, woven in embroidery of gold and silver. A Turkish Bashaw, whose sons Don John had made prisoners at the victory of Lepanto, six years before, and whom he had restored without ransom to their father, presented him with the materials. He caused them to be made up at Milan, a city in which were found the most expert workmen of Europe, in that branch of luxury." [y]

Commonly removed from one palace to another.

It was a common practice to take down and remove the principal tapestries of the crown, as often as the sovereign changed his residence, for the purpose of hanging them on the walls of the chief apartments of the palace. At the precise moment of time when the Duke of Guise was assassinated at Blois, a workman was occupied in unhooking and taking down the hangings of the room, in order to transport them to Clery near Orleans, whither the King intended to transfer his residence. A piece of the tapestry was by Henry's command, laid over the dead body [z].

Hangings.

We may judge of the value and splendor of the hangings used on great occasions, in the palaces of noblemen of high rank, by the description of that suit which was put up in the hall of the Constable Montmorenci's house at Paris, in 1567, when he lay in state after his decease. It was composed of crimson velvet, bordered with pearls, mixed with embroidery of gold

[y] Memoires de Marg. p. 112, 113.
[z] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 109.

 thread.

thread. The floor was covered with Turkey carpets: in the middle stood a Catafalque or bed of state, over which was spread a quilt of thirty yards square, made of cloth of gold, edged with ermine, and surmounted with a canopy of the same costly materials. The benches, pillows, and cushions, were all covered with gold tissue or brocade[a]. That great luxury in furnishing the castles of prelates and bishops, had displayed itself, even in provinces very remote from the capital, before the close of Henry the Second's reign; may be clearly inferred from the terms in which L'Hopital mentions the reception and entertainment given to Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, daughter of Francis the First, in 1559, at Rousillon in Dauphiné. She was then on her way from Paris to Turin. The mansion belonged to the Cardinal of Tournon, a magnificent prelate, one of the patrons of Rabelais, and a protector of polite letters. He was absent at Rome, but the honors were performed by his brother. "Our tables," says L'Hopital, "were splendidly served, and delicious wines were poured into vases of gold and silver. Nothing could equal the beauty of the linen, the furniture, and the number of rich carpets from Sidon and the coast of Asia Minor."[b]

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Luxury in the castles of the great ecclesiastics.

It is curious to remark that with all their magnificence, the nobility of France in that age, by no means possessed the virtue of cleanliness

Want of cleanliness.

[a] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 502 and 503.
[b] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Epitres, p. 288.

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liness in their dwellings. La Noue severely reproaches them with this characteristic defect; an imputation to which they seem as liable in the nineteenth, as they were in the sixteenth century. "No sooner," says he, "has a gentleman constructed a house, than he must of "necessity furnish it with tapestries from Flanders, and beds from Milan." — "But when "we see how neatly, and at how small an expence, the houses of simple citizens and merchants are fitted up, the nobles ought to be "ashamed to keep their rooms so filthy[c]."

Plate.

Silver plate began to be in common use among the higher orders of society. At the departure of the English embassador from Paris, in 1585, who had brought to Henry the Third, the order of the garter, from Elizabeth; the plate presented to him by the King, was estimated at five hundred pounds value[d]. One hundred crowns a day had been allowed him during his residence in the metropolis, for the support of his household. His stay did not however exceed three weeks[e]. The collation given by Cardinal Birague to Henry in 1580, of which mention has already been made, was not served up in plate,

Porcelain.

but in the Italian porcelain of Faenza, which was exceedingly beautiful. A singular circumstance not to be omitted is, that the greater part of the dishes, amounting to above eleven hundred in number, were broken in pieces by

[c] La Noue, p. 167 and 168.
[d] Busbeq. letter 48. p. 235.
[e] Ibid. letters 46 and 48.

the

the pages and lacqueys in attendance[f]. Under the same reign, it appears that the use of glass at meals, became common among persons of condition. Ronsard, in one of his poetical compositions, entitled "Le Verre," lavishes the warmest encomiums on the introduction of an article, at once so elegant and so delicate. He peculiarly praises their substitution in the place of those massy goblets of gold and silver, which were antecedently in general use at the tables of the great.[g]

Want of domestic convenience.

Notwithstanding the magnificence displayed by the nobility on particular occasions, and the ostentatious parade of wealth or grandeur, it is certain that general comfort or convenience were unknown. Almost all those inventions of domestic ease and enjoyment, so familiar in the present age, and so universally diffused, did not then exist, even in the palaces of princes. Chairs were scarcely known; only coffers or benches being found in the houses of the most elevated or wealthy individuals. We find no better furniture in the Queen-mother's chamber at Bourdeaux, in 1566; or in the royal apartments of the Louvre itself, in 1572, six years later[h]. Brantome seldom, if ever, mentions any other kind of seats, except chests[i]. Under Henry the Third, arm chairs were invented, but their use was confined to the court,

Chairs.

[f] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 112 and 113.

[g] Œuvres de Ronsard, 2d Bocage Royal, p. 130—134.

[h] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 200. Memoires de Marg. de Valois, p. 59.

[i] Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 273.

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and almost to the sovereign[k]. In the enumeration of the pieces of furniture exposed at the ceremony of the Constable of Montmorenci's funeral, we find only one chair, covered with velvet, which was that belonging to the deceased, in which he was used to sit at table[l]. So valuable indeed was furniture considered, that kings themselves constantly removed it from one palace to another, or inhabited apartments almost destitute of any convenience. In 1584, Catherine of Medicis finding her son the Duke of Anjou, in a hopeless state of health, at Chateau Thierry upon the river Marne, stripped the castle of its most costly moveables, which she caused to be put into boats, and transported to Paris by water. She executed this act, which appears to us so indecent, on the first of June; and the duke expired nine days afterwards[m]. It would however seem to be evident, from a comparison of all the accounts left us by contemporary writers, that furniture in the sixteenth century, was principally comprised under the three articles of tapestry, beds, and carpets: it is likewise to be observed, that of these, none were fabricated by the French themselves. Milan furnished the beds; Flanders provided the hangings, long known by the name of Arras, the city where they were manufactured; and the carpets were imported from the Levant. We find that on the decease of great per-

Mode of stripping the houses of the dying.

Furniture mostly imported.

[k] Art. de Verif. vol. i. p. 659.
[l] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 103.
[m] Mem. pour ser a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 177.

sonages,

sonages, the tapestries were usually taken down, as a mark of sorrow or mourning. In 1589, Henry the Third, in order to express the depth of his affliction for his mother's loss, caused the walls of all the apartments of state at Blois, to be painted black, on which were depictured tears[n]. We must admit that though a fanciful, they formed an elegant allusion to the expressions of grief.

Carriages, an essential component of modern luxury, were unknown in France at the end of Henry the Second's reign, in 1559; but we see them mentioned almost immediately afterwards. Christina, Princess of Denmark, Duchess of Lorrain, who attended the ceremony of Charles the Ninth's inaugeration in 1561, at Rheims, is one of the first persons stated to have been drawn in a coach. Brantome describes the vehicle accurately, as an eye-witness. "It "was," says he, "very magnificent, and en- "tirely covered with black velvet, on account "of her widowhood. Four white Turkish "horses drew it, the most beautiful that could "be chosen, and harnessed all four abreast, "like a triumphal chariot. The Duchess was "at one of the doors, habited in a gown of "black velvet; but her head was superbly "dressed in white. At the other door, sat "one of her daughters[o]." It may form matter of doubt, whether at that time, Catherine of Medicis herself possessed any coach. Bran-

Carriages.

Coaches.

[n] De Thou, vol. x. p. 503.
[o] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 123.

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tome expressly asserts that they did not exist under her husband's reign [p]. Before 1573, they were however become so common, that Sir Francis Walsingham returned from Fontainbleau to Paris, on his way back to England, in a chariot of Charles the Ninth, which the King had ordered for him, as a mark of attention shewn to Elizabeth's embassador [q]. In the following year, coaches are mentioned as constituting the ordinary conveyance of the Queen-mother; and in 1575, in order to prevent the escape of the Duke of Alenson and the King of Navarre, they were transported in carriages from Lyons, across a great part of France, to Rheims. [r]

Chariots.

Nearly about the same period, Margaret, Queen of Navarre, describes her chariot, as "gilt on the outside, and the inside lined with a "yellow velvet, edged with silver [s]." Towards the close of Henry the Third's reign, persons of eminence all over the kingdom, travelled in carriages. Chiverny in 1588 talks of his coach, as forming part of his establishment [t]. They were become so general in the metropolis before 1589, that as we learn from a contemporary writer, citizens of rank and consideration kept one, or even two coaches, for their own use [u]. The first president of the parliament of

Their encrease.

[p] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. Cap. Etrang. p. 288.

[q] Letter of Catherine of Medicis, dated the 29th April, 1573, in Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 330.

[r] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 400. Sully, vol. i. p. 15.

[s] Vie de Marg. p. 144. Mem. de Marg. p. 49.

[t] Chiverney, Mem. vol. i. p. 114.

[u] Satyre Menip. vol. iii. p. 199.

Toulouse,

Toulouse, Duranti, was returning in his coach, through the streets of the city, to his house, in January, 1589, when he was attacked, and at length murdered by the populace. [x]

Litters.

Litters continued notwithstanding to be long used by persons of both sexes, as the most commodious and indulgent mode of conveyance. They were usually borne by mules [y]. Henry the Third, on his return through Savoy across the Alps, in 1574, though then in the flower of youth, yet was carried in "a glazed litter;" while Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, a martial prince accustomed to fatigue, proceeded on horseback at the head of his troops [z]. Coaches were not only unwieldy, but rough; and independant of the ornaments used to decorate them, the carts of the present age may safely be pronounced a far more agreeable vehicle. When Margaret, Queen of Navarre, undertook her celebrated political journey to Spa, in 1577, she preferred a litter, and sent her attendants in coaches or chariots; for she uses the term indifferently in her memoirs. Her description of the cavalcade, is equally entertaining and curious. "I went," says she, "in "a litter constructed with pillars, and lined "with scarlet Spanish velvet, embroidered "with gold and silk. The litter was entirely "glazed [a]."—"It was followed by those of the "Princess of la Roche sur Yonne, and of Ma"dame de Tournon; by ten young ladies on

Description of the Queen of Navarre's litter.

[x] De Thou, vol. x. p. 567.
[y] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 224.
[z] De Thou, vol. 7. p. 133. [a] Mem. de Marg. p. 98.

"horse-

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" horseback, with their governesses; and by six " coaches or chariots, in which went the re- " maining ladies together with female atten- " dants. [b]

Horses.

There occurs scarcely any circumstance which excites more astonishment, than the enormous prices paid for horses, particularly for chargers, during the period under our review. They appear to have been chiefly reserved for war, or for parade.

Mules.

Mules were used on ordinary occasions, even by sovereigns. Ladies commonly rode a small breed of horses, denominated haqueneys[c]. Francis the First maintained an establishment of twelve mules, for his own immediate use. When the Cardinal of Lorrain repaired to Brussels in 1559, for the purpose of ratifying the peace concluded between the crowns of France and Spain; he took with him thirty sumpter mules, covered with crimson velvet, on which were embroidered his arms and Cardinal's hat, in gold or silver[d]. The joint establishment of Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, when only Dukes of Orleans and of Angouleme, during their childhood, consisted of six mules, four little haqueneys for their own mounting, with six nags for their esquires[e]. " I perfectly remember, as a boy," adds Brantome, " that Margaret, sister of " Francis the First, that great Queen of Na- " varre, kept only three sumpter mules, and " six for her two litters. She had, it is true,

Progress of luxury.

[b] Vie de Marg. p. 201 and 202.
[c] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 112.
[d] Ibid. p. 213.
[e] Ibid. vol. ii. Cap. Etrang. p. 234.

" three

"three or four "chariots" for her females. "At present, neither men nor women are con- "tent with so small a number[f]." Noblemen, general officers, and magistrates, when riding out for pleasure or business, were mounted upon mules[g]. In 1581, the price of a common animal of that species, was, it seems, about forty-five crowns[h]. Montaigne had purchased three short-tailed nags, a few days before, for a hundred crowns[i]. Brantome says, that the price of that breed of horses had doubled in his time, having risen from thirty, to sixty crowns[k]. But it is in Montluc, and in Sully, that we see with amazement, the sums given for fine horses. From a hundred, to a hundred and fifty crowns, are the lowest prices of which they make mention. It is however to be remarked, that they always speak of chargers and coursers used in war. Only strong horses could carry the immense weight of a man cased in complete armor. The animal himself was likewise frequently barded, or covered with iron mail in front. One of that description, Montluc estimates as worth above seventy pounds Sterling[l]. Sully assures us, that he sold two horses; one to the "Vidame" of Chartres, for three hundred crowns; and the other, a beautiful creature, of a Spanish breed, to the Duke of Nemours, for six hundred.

Augmentation of the price of horses.

[f] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etrang. p. 235.
[g] Ibid. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 204. Ibid. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 149.
[h] Voyages de Montaigne, vol. iii. p. 459. [i] Ibid. p. 452, 453.
[k] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 319.
[l] Montluc, Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 228—230.

Such

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Such a sum, allowing for the difference in the value of money, would be esteemed high, even for a racer of the first reputation, in the present age[m]. A very considerable traffic was carried on between the German empire and France, in the article of horses. Men of quality did not, it seems, in that age, more than in the present, disdain to become dealers: we find that Sully made prodigious profits, by buying up small horses in Germany, where they were to be procured at low prices; and afterwards selling them for large sums, in Gascony. He owns that he in a great measure maintained the expence of his household, by this lucrative commerce.[n]

Trade in horses.

Pages.

One of the principal modes of providing for youth, was to place them as pages in the families of the great. Gentlemen of slender fortunes, had recourse to the protection of the wealthy nobility, to receive their children. Fidelity, obedience, and adherence, were exacted on one side: patronage and support were extended on the other. Sovereigns maintained a vast number about their persons, and in their court, who after a few years, when they attained to a proper age, became incorporated in the cavalry or infantry. They were divided into distinct classes or departments; of the bed-chamber, the great stables, the royal hunt, the falconry, and other branches of the household. Henry the Second usually retained above one hundred and twenty pages, of

Their numbers.

[m] Sully, vol. i. p. 43.

[n] Ibid. p. 41.

whom

Severity of their treatment.

whom he annually dispatched at least fifty to the wars [o]. How severe was the discipline enforced, and how absolute the power arrogated over them, may be judged from the entertaining description given us by Brantome. "My father and Monsieur d'Etrées," says he, "had "both been brought up pages of the Queen "Anne of Bretagne, and they rode upon the "mules of her litter. I have often heard them "say, that she caused them to be severely "whipped, whenever they did not properly "guide the mules, or if they stumbled the "least in the world. My father rode upon the "foremost; and Monsieur d'Etrées, upon the "second. When their time was expired, she "sent them both into Italy, to the army [p]."

The correction of the whip, or of the rod, so much disused among us in the present times, was not by any means confined to boys, in the sixteenth century. Young women of high condition were frequently subjected to that humiliating punishment. "Catherine of Medi-"cis," says Brantome, "caused Mademoi-"selle de Limeuil, and two others of her com-"panions, all of them maids of honor, to be "most severely flogged, for having written a "Pasquinade upon the court [q]." So numerous were the pages about the palaces of kings, that they composed a formidable body; more especially as being in the first fire of youth, they be-

[o] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 43.
[p] Ibid. vol. i. Cap. Fran. 224.
[q] Ibid. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 421.

came

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came enthusiastically attached to their respective lords or masters. A quarrel having arisen in the castle of Blois, during the convocation of the States in November, 1588, between the pages of the Duke of Montpensier, a prince of the blood, and those of the Duke of Guise, in which a page of the latter was left dead upon the spot; the whole court took the alarm. All the nobility, princes, even the King in person, having armed themselves, repaired to the place; and if the Duke of Guise had manifested the smallest inclination to bring matters to an issue, a general carnage would have commenced between the two factions of the Royalists and "the League." Henry, after so serious an outrage committed on the majesty of the throne, and the respect due to the residence of the sovereign, issued an order, prohibiting every page or footman, from presuming to enter the court of the castle with arms, on pain of chastisement with the whip.[r]

Danger arising from their numbers.

Such was the respect borne by gentlemen, towards those personages under whom they had been brought up as pages, that no length of time, or elevation, however great, to which they might subsequently attain, could cancel and obliterate the obligation. "Monsieur d'Esse," says Brantome, "who had been page to Andrew "de Vivonne my grandfather, although he rose "to the highest military and civil dignities, yet "when he came to visit my grandmother, would

Respect paid by pages, to their masters.

[r] De Thou, vol. x. p. 415—417. Davila, p. 737.

"never

"never permit himself to wash his hands at the "same time with her, on sitting down to table; "declaring that it was impossible for him to "lose the becoming recollection of his having "been a domestic servant in her house[s]." It is evident that much of this reverence had been lost, after the commencement of the civil commotions, which deeply affected and changed the national manners; as similar internal calamities have deteriorated and degraded the French character, in the present age. In 1563, Catherine of Medicis, writing to her son Charles the Ninth, for the purpose of exhorting him to follow the examples of his father and grandfather, in the manner of holding or regulating his court, thus expresses herself: "Under the "two last reigns, the archers of the guard re- "mained usually in the apartments, on the stair- "cases, and in the court-yards, to prevent the "pages and lacqueys from gaming, as they pre- "sume to do at present; nay, to hold re- "gular gaming tables in the castle itself where "you are lodged, with oaths and blasphemies; "a thing execrable[t]!"

Dissolution of manners, under Charles the Ninth.

La Noue, who discusses the advantages derived from the custom of placing the youth, in quality of pages, about the great nobility; and who exposes with energy, the characteristic vices inseparable from that mode of education; informs us how relaxed the superintendence was become under Henry the Third. "We

[s] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p.183.
[t] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p.452.

"have

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"have seen princes and noblemen," says he, "who received such a number of pages, that "they abandoned all care, not only of their in- "struction, but, even of their cloathing. In- "stances have been known of pages, who were "without breeches, and who were left to play "at bowls with lacqueys and stable boys[u]." It cannot however be questioned, that the original institution in itself was one of a beneficial nature, peculiarly as a resource to the inferior gentry, who thus provided for their numerous sons. We may likewise consider it as forming a nursery, from which the military service was furnished with continual recruits; many of the greatest commanders in the sixteenth century, having risen to high military honors, from the condition of pages. Cheleque and Klinquebert, two German youths in that employment under Francis, Duke of Guise, who were unfortunately too active during the memorable massacre of Vassy, in 1562; attained to a very considerable degree of military eminence, as well as to an uncommon share of royal favor. One of them constantly carried the Duke's fowling piece, and the other, his pistols.[x]

Consequences of it.

Benefits arising from the custom of having pages.

Lacqueys.

Besides pages, the great entertained in their service, a prodigious number of domestics or lacqueys, who being commonly armed, appeared ready on every occasion to espouse the quarrels, or to aid the resentment of their master. We find that in 1584, Henry the Third, when re-

Their numbers.

[u] La Noue, p. 117—119, and p. 124.
[x] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 88.

forming his household, dismissed at once near one hundred and thirty valets. They were reduced from one hundred and fifty, to twenty-four [y]. Even Don Antonio, the fugitive king of Portugal, though subsisting chiefly on the bounty of the French court, yet kept about sixty servants, after his defeat at the Azores, and his return to France [z]. They were frequently selected and retained, more for their courage and skill in managing weapons of offence, than from any other motive. Montluc tells us that he knew a gentleman, who never took any servant into his employ, till he had put a sword into the man's hand, and ascertained by actual proof, that he was master of the science of fencing. By this means, he attracted to his service a number of resolute and skilful guards for his protection, or devoted ministers of his revenge [a]. The Marquis of Meilleraye having killed in a duel, Livarot, one of the minions of Henry the Third, was murdered by the lacquey of his antagonist, as he returned from the place of action [b]. How dangerous it was found to molest them, and how formidable were their numbers, we may collect from many instances. Charles, Duke of Orleans, youngest son to Francis the First, having in a juvenile frolic, attacked the lacqueys who were in possession of the bridge of Amboise, at the head of a band of the young

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They were armed.

Danger of molesting them.

[y] Busbeq. Letter 31, p. 181. [z] Ibid. Letter 20, p. 122.
[a] Montluc, Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 290 and 291.
[b] Brant. Les Duels, p. 110.

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nobility, during the night; was received by them in so resolute a manner, that he ran the most imminent hazard of his life. Castelnau who interposed, and received the thrust made at him, fell dead upon the spot. [c]

Buffoons.

Buffoons or jesters constituted no inconsiderable personages in the court of sovereigns, during the period under our consideration. If we may believe the story related by Brantome, which bears in it the strong marks of authenticity, they sometimes were entitled to a more respectable appellation, and might rather be denominated monitors. Louis the Eleventh, says he, was overheard by his fool, in the act of confessing the murder of his brother Charles, Duke of Guienne, while imploring the interposition of the Virgin, to procure from the Divine Being, his forgiveness for the crime. The King, who was on his knees, before the altar of "our lady of Clery," near Orleans, performing his devotions, when he made a disclosure of so much consequence, paid no attention to the buffoon, as conceiving him too contemptible and destitute of comprehension, either to hear, or to retain the fact. But the jester, who having been in the service of the murdered Duke, bore an affection to his memory, reproached the King as he sat at table, with his guilt, and accused him from his own confession, with having dispatched his brother. It may be well supposed that even a prince

Anecdote of Louis the Eleventh.

[c] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 345 and 346.

less

less flagitious than Louis the Eleventh, could not digest so unexpected, as well as cutting a reprimand. The author of it expiated with his life, the imprudence or honesty of his conduct; which probably, in the estimation of the courtiers, might well pass for an incontestable proof of folly [d]. His successors appear to have taken warning by his fate, and to have occupied themselves rather in amusing, than in troubling their masters.

Brusquet. His rise, and history.

The buffoon of Henry the Second, Brusquet, who attained to some celebrity in his profession, seems to have been a cunning, rapacious, sagacious knave, who was allowed to divert the King in any way, at the expence of all those individuals who frequented the court. Having been appointed post-master of Paris, he amassed very considerable wealth, partly by pilfering, and partly by benefactions or donations of various kinds. If we may judge of his powers of exciting mirth, from the numerous specimens given us by Brantome, he would not, in the present age, have been thought sufficiently witty or expert, to have played the part of a Merry Andrew in a country fair. Yet he certainly contributed greatly to enliven the drawing room of Catherine of Medicis [e]. It is however to be observed, that a thousand tricks were played with him, as well as by him: provided the King and Queen were only amused, it appears to have been a matter of little con-

[d] Brantome, vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 30—32.
[e] Ibid. vol. ii. Cap. Etrang. p. 266—286.

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Credit enjoyed by him.

sequence, how severely Brusquet suffered. The Cardinal of Lorrain, when going on an embassy to Pope Paul the Fourth, being about to cross the Alps, could not dispense with the society of so agreeable a companion, whom he therefore carried with him to Rome [f]. It furnishes not a little entertainment to see, that at the peace in 1559, concluded between the crowns of France and Spain, the first interchange of amity between the two monarchs, is the reciprocal present of their respective jesters. But, the Spanish fool was a mere "Buffo Magro," says Brantome, compared with ours, who preserved over him a vast superiority [g]. Philip the Second, severe and gloomy as he was from natural character, yet relaxed from his Castilian gravity, in his treatment of Brusquet; while Henry the Second, not to appear behindhand in munificence or politeness, loaded the foreign jester with presents [h]. Brantome, after enumerating all the eminent buffoons of five succeeding reigns, gives the decided preference to Brusquet's jests; and only laments that at last he became suspected of a serious attachment to the reformed religion. For this crime, one of the most heinous which he could have committed, he lost his place, was plundered of his property, and finally driven to take refuge with the Duchess of Bouillon, at Sedan, where he soon afterwards died in obscurity and indigence. [i]

His disgrace.

[f] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etrang. p. 283. [g] Ibid. p. 291.
[h] Ibid. p. 292. [i] Ibid. p. 293 and 294.

Great

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Great personages seem never to have travelled without at least one jester, to dissipate the melancholy of their own reflections, or to enliven the conversation. Margaret, daughter of Francis the First, when on her journey from Paris into Savoy in 1559, was allowed two buffoons to disperse her chagrin; probably on account of the disastrous circumstances under which her marriage with Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, took place, while her brother Henry the Second lay expiring. The provision of mirth did not prove too ample; for the chief jester being seized with a fever at Rouanne, not far from Lyons, the second buffoon found himself compelled to exert all his talents in order to divert the princess. L'Hopital, who accompanied her, and who has left us a poetic Latin journal of the route from Paris to Nice, which may vie in delicacy with the fourth satire of the first book of Horace, describes the nature of the efforts made by Margaret's jester. They betray neither extent of talents, nor variety of abilities. "Having covered himself," says l'Hopital, "with a fox's skin, and besmeared his face "with flour, he began the satire's dance, "mimicking at the same time the silly and "ridiculous movements of the peasants. Gra- "dually augmenting his address, he contrived "to seat himself upon a large stick, while he "embraced both his thighs. Every one who "attempted to imitate him, fell down; and "their fall only increased the laughter of the

Jesters.

Nature of their wit and humour.

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" spectators[k]." It must be owned that such an attempt at diversion, does not convey any very elevated idea of the taste of the age: but perhaps it may be thought neither more coarse, nor more destitute of wit, than the contest between Sarmentus and Messius Cicirrus, on which, Horace, in his journey from Rome to Brundusium, dilates with so much complacency; and which seems to have furnished such entertainment to Mæcenas, Virgil, and the other spectators. There is even a singular and ridiculous similarity between the *Satire's* dance of Margaret's jester here described, and the challenge of Sarmentus to his antagonist, " Pastorem saltaret uti *Cyclopa*."

Thony.

Cardinals and great prelates, carried always jesters in their train. " The Constable Mont-
" morenci," says Brantome, " was so fond of
" Thony the buffoon, that he usually had him
" at dinner, and placed him on a joint-stool
" near himself, treating him like a little king.
" If the pages or lacqueys displeased him, they
" were whipped[l]." It appears that the profession was by no means exclusively limited to men: there were female jesters; and Brantome cites the repartees of Mademoiselle Sevin, who occupied that employment in the household of the Queen of Navarre[m]. When the famous Corisande, Countess of Guiche, mistress of the King of Navarre, went to mass in 1584, at Nerac in Gascony, d'Aubigné assures us that

Female jesters.

[k] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Epitres, p. 283.
[l] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 126.
[m] Ibid. Dames Gal. p. 181.

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she was regularly accompanied by a running footman, a buffoon, a Moor, a lacquey, an ape, and a water spaniel [n]. We must confess that the manners of those times were very essentially different from our own; and that such attendants to a place of religious worship, would appear to us a species of indecent profanation, rather than an act of piety.

Watches.

Among the ornaments or inventions become common under Henry the Third, may be reckoned watches, though they did not originate among the French. The first watch ever seen in France, was found in 1544, among the spoils of the Marquis del Guasto, the Imperial commander, after the battle of Cerizoles in Piedmont. Being sent by the victorious general, the Duke of Enghien, to Francis the First, it formed an object of admiration to his courtiers [o]. In 1588 they were commonly worn hanging from the neck [p]. The introduction and use of snuff among the French, is likewise due to this period. John Nicod, a master of requests, on his return from an embassy to Portugal, on which he had been sent, brought some of that mixture to Paris. It was at first denominated from him, "La Nicodine;" but Catherine of Medicis liking the herb, and taking it herself, it received the name of "L'Herbe "à la Reine," by which it was long distinguished in the capital of France. [q]

Snuff.

[n] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 102.
[o] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Etrang. p. 390.
[p] L'Etoile, p. 108.
[q] Letters du Card. d'Ossat. vol. i. p. 5, note.

CHAP. VI.

Passion for martial exercises. — Tournaments, and combats at the barrier. — Judicial combats. — Relation of that between Jarnac and La Chataigneraye. — Defiances. — Diversions. — Entertainments. — Sports. — Occupations. — Colours. — Devices. — Rage for gaming. — Theatrical representations. — False coiners. — Retainers. — Spies. — Duels. — Assassinations. — Murders. — Study and practice of magic. — Demoniacs. — Enchantments. — Astrology. — Horoscopes and calculations of nativity. — Transmutation of metals, and alchymy. — Pilgrimages and jubilees. — Roads. — Inns. — Frequency, and ravages of the plague. — Distempers. — Review of the characteristic vices and virtues of the period. — Conclusion.

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Passions for martial exercises.

ONE of the strongest national features which characterized the period under our review, was the passion for martial exercises. It pervaded every species of diversion or amusement, rendering them fierce, dangerous, and sanguinary. The genius and spirit of chivalry, however rapidly on their decline, were yet far from being extinct; and the fatal accident by which Henry the Second lost his life, though it checked the rage for tournaments, did not produce their suppression or abolition. A knowledge of the art of fencing in all its extent, together with a perfect acquaintance with the science of offence and defence, formed not merely the accomplishment

complishment of a gentleman: it might be considered as indispensable for the absolute preservation of life and honor. Every weapon had its respective masters or professors, who excelled in their use or management; and in order to be prepared for occurrences, it became necessary to be equally skilful with the Harquebuss, the sword, the dagger, and the lance. Rome, Milan, and Ferrara, supplied the most expert gladiators for the instruction of the French youth; who usually passed a considerable portion of their early life, in acquiring such a degree of dexterity in the practice of arms, as to extricate themselves with success from the frequent quarrels, which arose upon the slightest occasions[a]. The young men of condition were occupied during whole days, in fencing; and the lower chambers of the palace of the Louvre, which constituted the scene of their pastime, might be regarded as a sort of school or academy for those exercises of the body[b], just as the groves of Academus, or the portico at Athens in antiquity, were frequented for the cultivation of the mind. D'Aubigné describes the court of Nerac, in Gascony, as filled with gentlemen employed in the same diversion.[c]

Practice of arms.

Among the various species of martial amusements practiced under the last princes of Valois, the only kind which displayed the utmost vigor and address, without any mixture of personal

Running at the ring.

[a] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 427.
[b] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 107.
[c] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 101.

danger

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danger or hazard, was the pastime of running at the ring. It was commonly exhibited either during the Carnival, or on some occasion of festivity; as the persons were masked, and disguised by grotesque dresses, calculated to heighten the singularity of the spectacle. Female ornaments and attire were always preferred. "I saw," says Brantome, "a course at "the ring, under Francis the Second, at Amboise, where the performers were the grand "Prior of Lorrain, and the Duke of Nemours, two of the best Cavaliers in France. "The grand Prior was mounted on a Barb, "dressed very elegantly as a Gipsey woman. "On his head he wore the large round Gipsey "hat; his gown and petticoat were composed "of velvet and taffety, made very full. Within "his left arm he held, instead of a little child, "a small female ape, swaddled precisely like "an infant. But after the fourth course, he "was obliged to disembarrass himself of the "animal. The Duke of Nemours was habited "as a tradesman's wife, with a hat and a gown "of black cloth: at his waist hung a housewife's bag, and a large silver chain, to which "was fastened a ring, with above a hundred "keys hanging on it. The noise produced by "the multitude of keys, was very amusing. "Both the performers were masked: they made "ten courses, and at the eleventh, the grand "Prior carried off the ring [d]." We find Henry

Grotesque dresses worn.

Description of a course, at Amboise.

[d] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 399—401.

the

the Third engaged in the same diversion at Paris in 1576, when he wore the dress and arms of an Amazon[e]. The King of Navarre, who excelled in every military or manly exercise, never during his whole life omitted any occasion of displaying his ability and prowess. In 1581, both he and his cousin Henry, Prince of Condé tilted, and ran at the ring, in honor of d'Aubigné's nuptials.[f]

Other instances.

Tournaments, and combats at the barrier, diversions of a much fiercer species, were accompanied with personal danger, notwithstanding all the precautions used to prevent their mischievious consequences. We cannot sufficiently express our amazement at the pertinacity, with which not only the French, but all the European nations adhered to them, in defiance of the most tragical, and frequently repeated catastrophes. In 1549, Henry the Second published through Italy, Germany, and Spain, the celebration of a great Tournament. He himself, accompanied by the princes of the blood, were the assailants against Francis, Duke of Guise, and others. Marshal Tavannes was among the number. Every ceremony of chivalry was religiously observed by the combatants. Tavannes assures us, that he was the only one of the noblemen maintaining the barrier, who escaped unwounded; that the diversion lasted eight days; and that he ordinarily broke sixty

Tournaments.

Danger and severity of those amusements.

[e] L'Etoile, p. 19.
[f] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 92. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 186.

lances,

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lances, every day[g]. The death of Henry the Second, an event in itself so productive of national calamity, and so calculated to impress with lasting appehension, could not prevent a renewal of the same games at Orleans, in the presence of Francis the Second, only a year afterwards. A youth of the royal blood, the Marquis de Beaupreau, Henry of Bourbon, son to the Prince of La Roche sur Yonne, and last in the order of succession to the French crown, was killed at the early age of fourteen, by the shock which he received from the Count of Maulevrier's horse[h]. Those persons who only lost an eye, or received a severe wound, might, says Brantome, be esteemed fortunate[i]. In 1571, at the festival of Nogent, was held a combat at the barrier, which continued during two nights, and was performed by torch light. Henry, Duke of Guise, maintained the barrier on the first evening, against Charles the Ninth and other assailants. The King was wounded in the foot, by his antagonist's sword, which breaking with the violence of the blow, caused a great effusion of blood. Catherine of Medicis, who had seen her husband perish in a Tournament, had reason to be alarmed for the life of her son[k]. One of the most magnificent exhibitions of this kind, was presented in front of the Louvre, in August, 1572, in honor of

Examples.

Combats at the barrier.

Festival of Nogent.

Combat of 1572.

[g] Tavannes, p. 127.

[h] L'Art de Verif. vol. i. p. 648. Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 304.

[i] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 215.

[k] Manusc. au Depôt de Bethune, N° 8722, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 85.

the

the King of Navarre's nuptials, only a few days preceding the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Charles the Ninth and his brothers, habited themselves as Amazons: the King of Navarre, together with his attendants, assuming the Turkish dress, were clothed in long robes of brocade, with turbans on their heads. The combatants encountered with lances, in presence of the queens, and all the ladies of the court.[1]

Arts used.

We may see in the Memoirs of Marshal Tavannes, with what pains the nobility and gentlemen endeavoured to harden their bodies; thereby enuring themselves to support the shocks and injuries, so commonly received in these fierce amusements. He tells us, that at the Tournament of 1549, he used every night to plunge his right arm into oil of sweet almonds, and to tie ligatures round it; by which means, while many of his companions had their arms entirely black with contusions, he preserved his vigor and freshness[m]. But if we are desirous to form an estimate of the taste and elegance, which accompanied the diversions of this portion of the sixteenth century, we shall behold them fully displayed in the entertainments exhibited by Elizabeth, Queen of England, in honor of her suitor, Francis, Duke of Anjou. On New Year's Day, 1582, a combat at the barrier was given in the court of the palace of Westminster; where the Duke, accompanied by several noblemen, French and

Sentence continued.

Taste of the diversions,

[1] Vie de Marg. p. 94.

[m] Travannes, p. 127.

English,

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English, of the highest quality, defied all comers. He entered the lists in person, seated upon a carriage constructed in form of a rock. His hands being fettered with golden chains, he was conducted to the feet of Elizabeth, by love and destiny; two personages who sung alternately sonnets composed in French, descriptive of the violence of his passion, supplicating the Queen to raise him to her throne and bed. The combat lasted till an hour after midnight, in presence of two or three thousand persons; and the device chosen by the Duke of Anjou for the occasion was,

"Serviet æternum, dulcis quem torquet Eliza."

The presents which he made on that day, to different noblemen and ladies of the English court, amounted in value to near ten thousand crowns. To Elizabeth he presented a ship composed of precious stones, which she accepted with public testimonies of pleasure and attachment. The Queen even gave him more personal and flattering marks of her predilection, by kissing and toying with him before all the spectators. She afterwards condescended to conduct him to his apartment, and to visit him next day in his bed.

in England.

Delicacy did not constitute the distinguishing characteristic of female manners, in that century; and the sensations of complacency or attachment, which ladies of her exalted rank experienced, they conceived themselves at liberty to express without any reserve. But we may safely

safely assert, that the good sense and refined manners of the present age, would not have tolerated such exhibitions. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that this amorous Princess was then full forty-eight years of age, while her lover scarcely had attained his twenty-seventh year. Masquerades, in which Elizabeth danced with the Duke, succeeded to the combats at the barrier. Magic, enchantments, aided by the spirit of chivalry, were called in to the aid of music and festivity. Imprisoned knights detained by sorcery in the dungeons of a castle, were liberated by the interposition of "a prince the most magnanimous and constant in love, and of a Queen the most chaste, virtuous, and heroic who existed on earth." After extinguishing the Necromancer's lamp, which constituted the charm, Elizabeth and Francis advancing, restored the captives to freedom. Every circumstance attending these gallant and magnificent diversions; for such they must still be esteemed, however puerile or pantomimical they appear to us in the nineteenth century; may be found in the Memoirs of the Duke of Nevers. [n]

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Under Henry the Third, it may be said that tournaments finally expired among the French. The last memorable exhibition of that kind which history commemorates, was given in 1580, by Charles Duke of Mayenne, who afterwards became the head of "the League," at the city of Grenoble in Dauphiné. Having invited

Decline of tournaments.

[n] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 557—559.

the

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the nobility of the province, and even the Protestants, against whom he was about to make serious and effective war, to break a lance in honor of the ladies; many gentlemen, Hugenot, as well as Catholic, relying on his honor, complied with the summons. Lesdiguieres himself, the general of the Calvinist party in that province, came among the number. Mayenne received him with every mark of respect and distinction; nor had any of those individuals who repaired to Grenoble on the assurance of protection, reason to repent of their confidence. So much did the spirit of chivalry repress and extinguish for the moment, even religious animosity[o]. Such was the passion for tournaments, that they became varied in every shape, and were not confined to a single element. The water, as well as the land, formed the scene of these combats. In 1568, Charles the Ninth exhibited to the Parisians, the spectacle of a naval engagement on the Seine, in front of the palace of the Louvre. He himself in person defended a boat against his brother, the Duke of Anjou, who was the assailant. Brantome, so celebrated for his Memoirs, which have preserved a number of curious and interesting anecdotes, highly elucidatory of the manners of that age, performed a part in the entertainment. He informs us, that he saved with difficulty one of his comrades, the Baron de Montesquieu, from being drowned, by plunging

Combats on the water.

[o] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 388. Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 85.

into

into the water, and dragging him to the vessel [p]. With what fatal consequences, the tournaments of the sixteenth century were attended at an earlier period of it, may be collected from numberless instances. The great Marquis of Pescara, who commanded the armies of the Emperor Charles the Fifth in Lombardy, during the wars between France and Spain, having sent a defiance to the Duke of Nemours, the French general, challenged him to an encounter with lances; each of them to be accompanied by three chosen followers; the offer was instantly accepted on the part of Nemours. Having met on the day appointed, under the walls of the town of Asti in Piedmont; the leaders, after breaking their lances on each other's armor, without receiving any other personal injury, raised their vizors, and interchanged embraces, with the utmost courtesy. But on the part of their attendants, the conflict did not end in so bloodless a manner. Two of the French, and one of the Spanish gentlemen, who were mortally wounded, either expired upon the spot, or only survived during a few days. [q]

Fatal consequences of them.

Numbers killed.

The particular species of combat, denominated "judicial," from its being regarded as an appeal to the immediate justice and interposition of the Supreme Being in favour of innocence against crime, had not totally dis-

Judicial combats.

[p] Brantome, vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 221 and 222.
[q] Ibid. p. 10—12.

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appeared before the advancing progress of reason and philosophy, during the period under our examination. Francis the First not only permitted, but was present at several of these Gothic appeals to Heaven, during the course of his reign; rather however, as it would seem, in compliance with the barbarous prejudices of preceding times, than from any conviction of their propriety, or real approbation of their principle [r]. The most celebrated instance of this kind, exhibited under the last kings of the family of Valois, was the memorable combat between Jarnac and La Chataigneraye in 1547, immediately after the accession of Henry the Second. The cause of quarrel had originated during the reign of Francis the First: but that prince, superior to the age in which he flourished, and grown parsimonious during his latter years, of the blood, as well as of the property of his subjects, prohibited the two parties from proceeding to extremities, on pain of his indignation [s]. He possessed sufficient enlargement of mind to say in his privy council, when the matter came under debate before them, that "a sovereign ought never to sanction or permit an act, from which no public benefit could possibly result." His successor, far inferior to Francis in strength of understanding, did not imitate him in so judicious and beneficial a line of conduct. He became even in some measure implicated in the subject

Combat of Jarnac, and La Chataigneraye.

Origin and cause of it.

[r] Brant. Les Duels, p. 35 and 36.
[s] Brant. Ibid. p. 169 and 170.

of dispute, and personally interested in its issue; having asserted that Jarnac had in confidence confessed to him when Dauphin, a criminal intimacy with his own mother-in-law. La Chataigneraye, who maintained the truth of Henry's allegation, was therefore in fact the royal champion. He was besides in the flower of his age, a distinguished favorite of the new sovereign, remarkable above every nobleman of the court, for vigor, address, and courage. Jarnac on the other hand laboured under many disadvantages, both physical and moral; but his own exertions, aided by the imprudent presumption of his enemy, decided the contest in his favor.

Circumstances attending it.

Every circumstance attending this combat, which may be considered as the last memorable example of its kind, is so highly characteristic of the modes of thinking and acting at the period when it took place, that they claim peculiar attention. The scene chosen for its performance, was the park of St. Germain, not remote from Paris, in presence of Henry the Second, surrounded by all the nobles and ladies of his court. It was preceded by every ceremony and solemnity which had been used in the darkest ages: the two combatants swore "on the Evangelists, on the true Cross, and "on the Faith of Baptism, that they had not "any charms, works, or incantations; but "trusted wholly to God, their right, the force "of their body, and their arms[t]." Brantome,

Ceremonies used.

[t] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 558.

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whose testimony on this occasion may be regarded as in some measure partial to his uncle La Chataigneraye, asserts that he owed his misfortune, to Jarnac's adopting a piece of defensive armor not usually worn; but which, the contempt of La Chataigneraye for his antagonist, induced him to overlook and admit as correct [u]. It was invented by one of those Italian masters of the science of arms, who then enjoyed such reputation at Paris, and of whom Jarnac received practical instructions, previous to the onset. The heralds having proclaimed silence, and enjoined every spectator "neither to cough, spit, nor presume to "make any manual sign whatever," the weapons of offence were lastly delivered to the parties.

Weapons.

They consisted in a sword, and two daggers; besides two other swords of reserve, which were held by the Constable Montmorenci, as a supply in case of any unforeseen accident. One of the heralds then gave the signal, by saying "Let them go, the good combatants." [x]

Issue of the combat.

The contest was soon decided: Jarnac, by a dextrous and unexpected back-stroke, having cut the tendons of his adversary's left leg, repeated the blow till he fell to the ground. It was in Jarnac's power therefore to have terminated all further hazard, by putting La Chataigneraye to death on the spot. But, conscious of the King's partiality towards him, and satisfied with the advantage acquired, the

[u] Brantome, Les Duels, p. 50 and 51.

[x] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 557 and 558. Sully, vol. i. p. 346.

con-

conqueror used his victory with the utmost moderation. Leaving his wounded antagonist where he lay, Jarnac approached the tribune in which Henry was seated; then putting himself on the knee, he besought of his sovereign to accept La Chataigneraye's life, and to restore him his own injured honor. It was not, however, till after three separate requisitions made at distinct intervals, and till no hope remained of the combat being renewed; that Henry, solicited anew by Jarnac, exhorted by the Duke of Vendome, and assured by the Constable Montmorenci, of La Chataigneraye's desperate condition, consented at length to accept the proffered and forfeit boon. He afterwards, it is true, embraced and commended Jarnac, declaring him restored in honor. La Chataigneraye, unable to survive so public and humiliating a misfortune, as well as disgrace, tore the dressings from his wounds, and expired [y]. The mixture of religion with gallantry, forms not the least singular and characteristic circumstance of this extraordinary transaction. Jarnac finding his enemy extended on the ground, incapable of further resistance, immediately fell upon his knees, and returned thanks aloud to God, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven. He beat upon his breast with his gauntlet, exclaiming in Latin, "O Lord, I am "not worthy." Then approaching the scaffold on which the ladies of distinction were seated,

Spirit of gallantry, and of devotion.

[y] Brant. Les Duels, p. 48.

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among whom was a female to whom he particularly addressed himself, he said, "Madam, "you always assured me that such would be "the termination." [z]

Privileges of the conqueror.

The conqueror did not venture to use any of the privileges, allowed by the laws of chivalry to those persons who vanquished their adversaries. How extensive, as well as how ignominious they were, we may judge from Brantome's account of a combat which took place at Sedan, beyond the limits of the French territories, on the frontier of Haynault, soon after the duel just narrated between Jarnac and La Chataigneraye. Henry, equally shocked and chagrined at the disastrous fate of his favorite, in which he necessarily felt a more than common interest, solemnly swore never again during his reign to permit of a second appeal to Heaven, by the mode of arms. Two gentlemen of his court, between whom a difference arose, had therefore recourse to the Duke of Bouillon, sovereign of the principality of Sedan, who as an independant prince, instantly complied with the request. But, one of the combatants, the Sieur de Fandilles, would not enter the place marked out for the lists, till he had first beheld a fire lighted, and a gibbet erected, on the latter of which he intended to hang, and afterwards consume to ashes in the flames, his antagonist's body [a]. The regret, or perhaps the remorse of Henry the Second, for La Chataigneraye's loss,

Decline of judicial combats.

[z] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 559.
[a] Brant. Les Duels, p. 4.

when

when added to the progress of sound reason; gradually extinguished, and insensibly abolished these absurd, as well as ridiculous appeals, which savoured not more of folly, than of impiety. They may still however be traced under Henry the Third, who assisted in person at a judicial combat between De Luines and Panier, in the commencement of his reign; but the vogue which antiently attended them, had completely ceased before its close[b]. The embassador of Solyman the Second at the court of France, having been a spectator of Jarnac's success, expressed his astonishment and disapprobation, that a sovereign should thus publicly permit, or rather authorize an act of deliberate murder to be performed in his presence[c]. So much more justly did a Mahometan and a Turk appreciate right and wrong, than the first monarch of the Christian world; and so faint were the efforts of the human mind about the middle of the sixteenth century, in opposition to established prejudices, among one of the most civilized nations in Europe.

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Sentiments of the Ottoman embassador, on the institution.

Solemn defiances, accompanied by challenges to single combat, continued nevertheless still to characterize the age, and seem to have been equally frequent as in the heroic times, under the walls of Troy, or of Thebes, when chiefs entrusted to their personal prowess, the fate of armies and nations. Previous to a general ac-

Defiances.

[b] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 418.
[c] Brant. Les Duels, p. 206 and 207.

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tion, while the forces on either side were preparing to engage, it was customary for the most intrepid or adventurous individuals, to quit the ranks before the shock of battle began, and riding forward, to demand of their adversaries the trial of a lance, in honor of the ladies[d].

Instances of them.

In 1577, we find the Duke of Mayenne sending to defy Henry, Prince of Condé, either singly, or with a chosen number of attendants. But, the answer returned by the Prince was, that whatever inclination he might feel to accept the challenge, a received principle prevented him, as combats never took place except among equals[e]. The latter, who was nearly allied to the crown of France, beheld at the time only two individuals interposed between himself and the reigning sovereign Henry the Third. He might therefore ascend the throne; whereas Mayenne, a younger son of a collateral branch of the ducal house of Lorrain, which had settled among the French, could not by any possibility rise to a parity with a prince of the blood. Yet the King of Navarre, some years afterwards, by a declaration addressed to Henry the Third, requested permission to level himself with the Duke of Guise, in order to decide the quarrel of the house of Bourbon against "the League," by a combat between them, with arms used among knights.[f]

Combat of Marolles and Marivaut.

The most singular encounter of this nature, happened on the second of August,

[d] Memoires de Marg. p. 183.
[e] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 510.
[f] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 8.

1589,

1589, only three or four hours after the decease of Henry the Third. L'Isle Marivaut, a royalist gentleman, stung with grief and rage at the base assassination of the King his master, and desirous to avenge it, defied the troops of the Duke of Mayenne; demanding to know if any individual would engage him, according to the laws of chivalry. Claude de Marolles, a zealous adherent of "the "League," instantly accepted the defiance; and the combatants, completely armed, met in presence of the two armies, under the walls of Paris. They were mounted on horseback, and rushed forward to engage, at the same instant. Marivaut's lance was shivered on the cuirass of his adversary, without effect; but the spear of Marolles entered the eye of the royalist champion, who had neglected from a presumptuous confidence in his own prowess, to lower his vizor. He expired immediately; and the preachers of "the League," animated by so auspicious an omen of success, predicted the infallible destruction of the party of the King of Navarre, against whom, Providence, as they asserted, seemed to manifest its anger. The event did not, however, justify their prediction[g]. During the course of the civil wars which afflicted Scotland in the succeeding century, the preachers of "the Covenant" made similar attempts to anticipate the intentions or decrees of Providence, which they confi-

Event of it.

[g] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 257. Journal d'Henry IV. vol. i. p. 1 and 2. Brant. Les Duels, p. 62—64.

dently

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dently ventured to foretell; but Montrose and Cromwell invariably proved them to be wrong by the result.

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Taste and elegance of the diversions.

If we reflect upon the diversity, taste, and magnificence of the amusements exhibited among the French, during the reigns of the four last princes of Valois, we shall find ample subject for admiration. In delicacy of conception, perhaps even in the splendor of their execution, it may be pronounced that they were not greatly inferior to the boasted pageants, displayed near a century later, by Louis the Fourteenth; to the embellishment of which, Quinault, Lulli, and Racine, rendered their talents subservient, while they have been immortalized by succeeding poets or historians. As early as 1549, at the public entry of Henry the Second into Lyons, games, in imitation of the gladiatorial, and naval spectacles of the Romans, were presented to that monarch[h]. We may see in the Memoirs of Margaret of Valois, how superb and how varied were the entertainments imagined by Catherine of Medicis, in order to protract, and to enliven the memorable interview, which took place between her daughter Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, and Charles the Ninth in 1565, at Bayonne; a city become for ever distinguished in our times, by the flagitious tissue of turpitudes and crimes developed within its walls in 1808, by a tyrant whose ambition

Public games.

[h] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 13—22; and vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 388—392.

has

has marked Europe with blood, from Lisbon to Moscow. Catherine chose for the scene of one of her most sumptuous festivals, the little island situate in the river Bidassoa, which separates the kingdoms of France and Spain; a spot afterwards rendered memorable by the peace of the Pyrenees, concluded in the succeeding century, between Louis the Fourteenth and Philip the Fourth. Tables were there disposed for the courtiers and nobility, male, as well as female; the table destined for the royal family, which was placed under a canopy at one extremity of the apartment, being raised above the others by an ascent of four steps composed of turf. Companies of shepherdesses, dressed in cloth of gold and satin, habited according to the respective Costumes or garb of the various French provinces, waited on the guests; after which they performed the provincial dances of their respective countries, in an adjoining meadow. On the excursion of the court by water down to the mouth of the Bidassoa, the splendid barges in which the King, the Queen of Spain, the Queen-mother, and their attendants embarked, were accompanied or surrounded by marine deities, singing and reciting verses in honor of the occasion. The banquet was terminated by a "Ballet" of nymphs and satyrs, executed with equal delicacy and fancy.

Festivals at Bayonne.

The mythology of antient Greece was rifled and exhausted, in the Masques and entertainments which accompanied the nuptials of the King of Navarre, celebrated in 1572, at Paris. The

Mythological, and allegorical representations.

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The impending destruction of the Hugonots at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, seemed even to be obviously pourtrayed in the enigmatical representations performed before the court. While it is difficult to suppose that Catherine of Medicis could intend thus to warn them of their danger, it appears equally difficult not to admit, that the application was manifestly so clear and obvious, as to strike the least suspicious or discerning spectators. The scenery represented the Elysian Fields, or rather the Paradise of Moses; for, the fables of Homer and Hesiod were mixed, by a strange species of profanation or incongruity, with the description given in Genesis, of the Garden of Eden. A river, the Styx, traversed the theatre, on which was beheld the boat of Charon. Behind the Elysium was constructed an "Empyreal Heaven," enclosing within a complicated piece of machinery which had an orbicular motion, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the seven primary planets, and an infinity of fixed stars. Twelve nymphs, stationed in the Elysian fields, were protected by Charles the Ninth and his two brothers, who defended the entrance, armed from head to foot. On the other side of the Styx, appeared Hell or "Tartarus," with its proper attributes and accompaniments, as delineated by the poets of antiquity. The King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and the Hugonot nobility, to whom was assigned the task of attacking the Elysian Fields, being overcome, were of course precipitated into the infernal regions. Mercury and

Scenery.

and Cupid then descended on the stage; and after different dances, the captives were released from their confinement. The representation was terminated by fire-works, which consumed to ashes the whole machinery and decorations[i]. The *Heaven*, vainly attacked by the King of Navarre; the precipitation of himself and his followers into *Hell;* followed by the *Flames* which closed the spectacle; — all these features of the exhibition appeared to conceal an allegorical allusion. Four days afterwards, the massacre of Paris actually took place.

Splendid entertainments of the French court.

Magnificent as appear to have been the entertainments of 1572, they were excelled by the diversions of the following year, at the reception of the Polish embassadors, who came to offer the crown of their kingdom, to the Duke of Anjou. In one of them, the Poles beheld with pleasure and astonishment, a prodigious mass of rock, encrusted with silver, which moved by concealed mechanism. On the summit were placed sixteen of the most beautiful women of quality, emblematical of the sixteen provinces which composed the kingdom of France. After singing, or repeating some verses, composed for the occasion by Ronsard and Dorat, they descended; presented to the new monarch various offerings or testimonies of homage, and concluded by performing a dance[k]. It is not easy to represent to ourselves, even in the pre-

[i] Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 90—92.

[k] Ibid. p. 123.

sent

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sent age, any exhibition conceived with more elegance of fancy. At the nuptials of the Duke of Joyeuse, which were celebrated in 1581, the Queen, Louisa of Vaudemont, sister to the bride, exhibited in the Louvre, a "Ballet" of Circé and her nymphs, executed with incomparable grace, by the ladies of the royal household [l]. We can scarcely credit, notwithstanding the well-known prodigality of Henry the Third, and the testimony of contemporary writers, that he expended in various festivities or diversions, on the above-mentioned marriage, a sum of not less than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of our money [m]. Many of the Masques or dances given at court, were celebrated by Desportes the poet, who composed Stanzas for the principal characters. We find in his works, the names of these diversions, which are taken usually from some mythological, or romantic fable. There is the Masque of the "Chevaliers fideles," and of the "Che- "valiers agitéz." In another, denominated the "Masque of Visions," night and morning appear, reciting verses in honor of the newly-married pair. They are ingenious, melodious, and full of grace [n]. Ronsard introduces the most fantastic and ideal beings or personages, in his Masques. The four Elements, personified, come forward in one of them, to defy the four Planets, who accept the chal-

Expence attending them.

[l] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 134.
[m] Ibid. p. 130.
[n] Œuvres de Desportes, p. 460—470.

lenge.

lenge [o]. Syrens and mermaids predict the future destiny of the French monarchs [p]. Charles the Ninth, habited one while as the Sun, and at another time as Hercules, pronounces a Cartel to love, which is sent by a dwarf. Such was the genius and spirit of the entertainments of that age.

Puerile amusements.

The indecent puerility, or contempt of national opinion manifested by Henry the Third, rose to such a point, that he did not blush to appear commonly in the streets of his own capital, playing with a "Bilboquet," or cup and ball. The fashion became general: Joyeuse and Epernon imitating their master, in a short time, all the gentlemen, pages, and even domestics were seen every where in public, with the same appendage [q]. It must be owned that if rebellion was ever venial in any people, it might plead some excuse, when provoked by such profusion, folly, and wanton abuse of power. De Thou himself assures us, that the King expended above twelve thousand pounds annually, in the single article of little dogs; besides the sums consumed on monkeys, parroquets, and other animals [r]. The ball given by him to the English embassadors, in 1585, cost him ten thousand crowns [s]. Two years afterwards, at Epernon's nuptials, he danced in public, with every indication of mirth, while at

Balls.

[o] Œuvres de Ronsard, Mascarades, p. 127—129.
[p] Ibid. p. 127—129.
[q] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 195.
[r] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 599.
[s] L'Etoile, p. 85.

his

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his waist hung a large chaplet of ivory skulls [t]. Like Heliogabalus, he affected the ornaments and dress of a woman. The almost incredible accounts given us by Dion and Herodian, respecting the indecent appearance of the Syrian Emperor of Rome, were realized by the French monarch. We know from the journal of L'Etoile, that in 1577 he commonly frequented public entertainments, in a female attire; his doublet open, and his bosom bare; with a necklace of pearls, and three little capes, as they were then worn by the ladies of the court [u]. Can we wonder that the Duke of Guise should meditate to inflict on so effeminate a prince, the same sentence of deposition and imprisonment, as was executed on Charles the Simple; or that the Duchess of Montpensier should menace him with the tonsure? Yet when roused to action, he displayed more energy of character than Louis the Sixteenth.

Effeminacy, and indecorum.

It would however be unjust, to appreciate the general character of the age, even in its pastimes, by the conduct or actions of so relaxed and dissolute a sovereign. The sports of the period were not only manly, but rough, hazardous, and daring to a point of temerity. Marshal Tavannes was accustomed, when young, to amuse himself with his companions, in leaping across the streets of Paris, from the roof of one house, over to that of another [x]. In presence of the court at Fontainebleau, he undertook, and, as it is pretended, he performed a leap on

Rude diversions of the age.

[t] L'Etoile, p. 102. [u] Ibid. p. 21.
[x] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 326.

horse-

horseback, of twenty-eight feet, from rock to rock [y]. We may, however, without incurring the imputation of scepticism, be allowed to doubt whether the mensuration in this instance was accurate, as twenty-eight feet French, made twenty-nine feet and three quarters English; a space which no horse of this country, it is believed, ever crossed at a leap. Frolics the most adventurous and desperate were common, particularly in the time of Carnival, when every indiscretion seemed to be sanctioned by the season. Henry the Second, in 1558, though he had then attained nearly his fortieth year, accompanied by the princes and youth of his court, on Shrove Tuesday, a day peculiarly distinguished for extravagant demonstrations of mirth and conviviality, rode through the streets of Paris, masked, committing the rashest actions. In a fit of wild emulation, the whole company mounted the great staircase of the hall in which were held the courts of justice, and galloped furiously down again, without incurring any accident [z]. We find Henry the Third himself, in the Carnival of 1583, and the following year, performing the same mad exploits, followed by his brother the Duke of Anjou, and his minions. They rode at full speed through the capital, in masks, overturning, beating, and ill-using every person who fell in their way [a]. On the night of the massacre

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Examples.

Henry the Second.

[y] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 527.
[z] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p 401.
[a] L'Etoile, p. 62 and p. 75.

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of St. Bartholomew, when the assassins came to the door of the Count de la Rochefoucault's apartment, and demanded entrance; he entertained so little suspicion of any design against his life, that he imagined it to be Charles the Ninth himself, at the head of a band of young courtiers, bent on some juvenile frolic. Impressed with this idea, he rose from his bed and dressed himself, exclaiming all the time, "These are the tricks of the late King, your "father; but you will not catch me thus." The door was no sooner opened, than he was instantly murdered. [b]

Occupations and amusements of the great.

Occupations the most severe and laborious, were considered as pastimes, and practised by sovereign princes for their diversion. Charles the Ninth beheaded animals, dissected them, and performed the functions of an executioner and a butcher, with singular address [c]. The present age, however refined, has not been wanting in a similar example of a crowned head, Ferdinand the Fourth, King of the two Sicilies; one of whose greatest enjoyments consisted in opening, and embowelling the deer or other game, which he had previously killed during the chace. It was common for Charles the Ninth to work at the forge, and even to make with his own hands, the barrels of musquets and Harquebusses [d]. Brantome says that Philibert Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, constantly

Forging armor.

[b] Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 9 and 10.
[c] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 25.
[d] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 25. Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 28.

amused

amused himself at the same robust exercise; adding that he had seen the Duke practise at his forge, in the garden of the palace at Turin. [e]

Coining.

There was not any piece of coin, either gold or silver, which Charles the Ninth had not learnt to strike so exquisitely, and to counterfeit so perfectly, as to deceive the nicest eye. It formed one of his favorite recreations to fabricate money, and to shew the pieces so struck, to his courtiers [f]. We can still less reconcile to our manners, and ideas of royal dignity or decorum, his introduction of ten thieves and common cutpurses, into the drawing-room of the Louvre, during a crouded ball and festival; with orders to them to exercise their address, at the expence of the company. He gave them assurance of impunity; watched their feats of dexterity; reviewed the amount of their plunder, which exceeded in value fifteen hundred crowns; permitted them to retain it; and then dismissed them, with menaces of being instantly hanged, if ever they ventured to repeat their depredations [g]. We learn this extraordinary fact from Brantome. It must be confessed, that such a conduct was not much calculated to amend the morals, or to effect the reformation of that class of his subjects.

Bear-hunting.

Bear-hunting constituted one of the sports of the court of Navarre. How hazardous the pursuit

[e] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 164 and 166.
[f] Ibid. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 29.
[g] Ibid. p. 29—31.

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of those animals sometimes proved, and how fatal were the accidents which continually attended the chace, we may see in perusing the memoirs of Sully. In 1578, during the course of a hunt given by the King of Navarre, in the province of Foix, at the foot of the Pyrenees; a bear, pursued by the hunters, and driven to madness by the number of lances fixed in his body, seized seven or eight of the soldiers stationed on the point of a rock, and precipitating himself with them from the eminence, dashed them to pieces [h]. These tragical adventures neither diminished the ardor of the sportsmen, nor tended to humanize and soften the genius of the diversion.

Colors and devices.

The period of time under our review, may be justly called the age of colors and devices. The former were worn, in honor of their mistresses, by kings, noblemen, and gentlemen of every rank. Marriage seems to have imposed in this particular, no restraint. At the naval games exhibited before Henry the Second and his Queen, by the city of Lyons, in 1549, the gallies which obtained the honors of triumph, were decorated with black and white, in compliment to the King and his mistress, Diana of Poitiers. Those which were vanquished, displayed green, the color always affected by Catherine of Medicis, previous to her husband's death [i]. No umbrage whatever appears to have been taken by her, at so public a mark of homage paid to her rival. On the day when Henry was

Universally worn.

[h] Sully, vol. i. p. 23.
[i] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 20.

killed

killed by Montgomery, in the lists of Paris, he was distinguished by the same livery. The three other princes, namely the Dukes of Ferrara, Guise, and Nemours; who maintained the barrier with the King, against all assailants; each appeared in the colors of their respective mistresses [k]. "Bussy d'Amboise wore," says Brantome, "two '*favors*,' given him by his mistress; "one in his hat, the other about his neck. "When he was ordered to quit the court of "France by Henry the Third, whose minions "he had insulted and defied; he besought of "me to assure the lady whom he served, that "those favors would infallibly induce him to "put to death the favorites, who had pro-"duced the affront received by him [l]." It was well known that the lady in question, was no less a person than the Queen of Navarre. Colors were assumed, not only as marks of devotion and gallantry towards the ladies, but as badges of friendship and adherence. At the judicial combat of Jarnac and La Chataigneraye, the band of gentlemen who were in the interests of the latter nobleman, amounted to five hundred, all habited in his colors, white and red. Those attached to Jarnac, did not exceed a hundred, dressed in white and black [m]. On all occasions of danger, or of glory, lovers never failed to decorate themselves in the colors or favors bestowed by the object of their affection. [n]

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Badges of gallantry, and friendship.

[k] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 39.
[l] Ibid. vol. iii. ibid. p. 404. [m] Brant. Les Duels. 60.
[n] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 316, and vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 402.

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Devices.

The imagination was tortured in the invention of devices, Anagrams, and mottos, assumed by persons of both sexes. Margaret, the second Queen of Navarre of that name, speaking of her litter, says; "there were, either in the "lining, or in the windows of it, forty differ- "ent devices, the words of which were in "Spanish or Italian, upon the Sun and its "effects." She had chosen a Sun for her emblem [o]. In 1568, Crussol, one of the Hugonot commanders, upon his standard caused to be represented a Hydra, all the heads of which monster were ornamented with the dresses of Cardinals, bishops, and monks. He himself, in the character of Hercules, was depictured as employed in their extermination. The motto, "Qui casso, crudeles," was an Anagram on his own name, Jacques de Crussol [p]. When Francis the First, having quitted his mistress, the Countess de Chateaubriant, attached himself to the Duchess d'Estampes; he demanded of the former lady, the restitution of his "devices," which he had caused to be inscribed, or engraven on all his presents to her. They were of the invention and composition of his sister, Margaret of Valois, first Queen of Navarre, and were regarded in that age, as the most delicate productions of female fancy. [q]

Rage for play.

The rage for play may be justly reckoned among the characteristic features of the time.

[o] Vie de Marg. p. 202. Memoires de Marg. p. 112.
[p] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 589.
[q] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 455 and 456.

It

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It was carried to a pernicious height under the reign of Henry the Third, and tended eminently to produce a general depravity of manners. That Prince violated decorum so far, as to establish in the Louvre itself, in 1579, a gaming-table for cards and dice, open to all comers, at which he gave the example of playing constantly in person. A company of Italians, who profited of his permission, won from him fifteen thousand crowns, in the course of a month[r]. Epernon imitated the model set him by his master. On the evening previous to his departure for Gascony in 1584, on the embassy to the King of Navarre, he lost above three hundred pounds sterling, to Marshal Retz[s]. The rapid progress of so destructive a vice, may be ascertained from Brantome. "The parties at Tennis," says he, "under "Henry the Second, were played for one, "two, and three hundred crowns at most, "even when the King played himself. At "present they are made for two, or three "thousand, and even double that sum[t]." Mary of Guise, Queen-dowager of Scotland, widow of James the Fifth, lost three thousand crowns in one evening, to Monsieur d'Esse, a French gentleman then resident in her court at Edinburgh. It seems to have constituted her Majesty's whole stock of ready money, as she continued the game upon honor,

Examples of it.

[r] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 105.
[s] Ibid. p. 176.
[t] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 46.

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without laying down any stake.[u] We may see the price of a pack of cards, purchased at the manufactory itself, in Montaigne. He says that in 1581, he paid for ordinary cards, at Thiers in Auvergne, where they were fabricated, only one Sous, or a halfpenny the pack. But, for finer cards, they demanded above six Sous, or three-pence.[x]

Cards.

Theatrical exhibitions.

Theatrical exhibitions began to be known under Henry the Third, as a public diversion.

Italian comedians.

In February, 1577, a company of Italian comedians, who entitled themselves "Li Gelosi," and whom that Prince had invited into his dominions from Venice, arrived in France. On their way through the provinces, they fell into the hands of the Hugonots; and the King, in order to procure their deliverance, was necessitated to pay the captors a considerable ransom. The comedians began to perform dramatic pieces, by his permission, in the great hall usually appropriated to the convocation of the States-general in the castle of Blois, where he then held his court[y]. Such was his impatience for the entertainment, that the remonstrances of the clergy, and of the Cardinal of Bourbon himself, could not induce him to delay the commencement of the comedies or pastorals, as they were denominated, till the conclusion of Lent[z]. On his return to Paris, in the month

[u] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 191.
[x] Voyages de Mont. vol. iii. p. 455.
[y] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 78.
[z] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 173 and 177.

of

of May of the same year, the performers opened a theatre in the palace of Bourbon, near the Louvre, where they renewed their exhibition. It would seem that there existed no distinction of places in the part of the theatre allotted to the spectators, as the price of all seats indiscriminately was fixed at four Sous, or two-pence. The concourse of people was immense, to partake of so novel a species of entertainment [a]. But in the following month, the Parliament issued a prohibition for continuing a diversion, which the magistrates conceived to be of a nature extremely injurious to national manners. From this sentence the Italians having appealed, presented the royal letters patent, authorizing them to perform in defiance of the mandates of the Parliament. It was in vain that the president and members of that venerable body imposed a fine of four hundred pounds on the comedians, if they presumed to obtain or to plead the King's sanction. Henry having interposed, by his express command the foreigners resumed and continued their performances, under his immediate protection [b]. No circumstance can more forcibly prove the low state of the French Drama, than the existence of an Italian spectacle in the metropolis, at a time that a national theatre was unknown in Paris.

Sustained by the King against the Parliament.

Among the serious misfortunes to which anarchy and contempt of the laws had given birth,

Counterfeit coin.

[a] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 79.
[b] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 81 and 82.

after

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after the commencement of the civil wars, may be reckoned the practice of counterfeiting the current coin of the kingdom. It is difficult to conceive how universal this evil had become, and to what a degree was debased the money in common circulation. Towards the conclusion of Henry the Third's reign, France became inundated with false coiners, who substituted the basest metals, in place of gold and silver.

Practice general.

Tavannes assures us, that gentlemen retained in their castles and houses, persons skilled in the art of fabricating money, whom they dignified with the appellation of philosophers; and who, after quitting the laboratory, eat at the tables of their employers. He adds, that those gentlemen who only counterfeited Dollars and Florins, which were German coins, and who abstained from striking French money, regarded themselves as free from all criminality [c]. Salcede, who was put to death in 1582, for having conspired against the State, had merited an exemplary punishment by his preceding crimes. Notwithstanding the penalty annexed to falsifying the coin of the kingdom, which was no less than throwing the culprit into boiling oil; he had fabricated such a quantity of base money, as enabled him to make with it the purchase of an estate [d]. It was not till the final termination of the internal calamities of France, and the restoration of vigor in the exe-

[c] Tavannes, p. 132 and 133.
[d] Busbeq. Letter 8th.

cution

cution of the laws under Henry the Fourth, that so pernicious an abuse was abolished. CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

The practice common among the great nobility, of keeping retainers, which constituted one of the most powerful supports of the feudal system; but which, the policy or tyranny of the two first princes of the house of Tudor, had totally extinguished in England, before the middle of the sixteenth century; continued still to exist among the French. It even derived strength, and became more confirmed, from the disorders of the court and kingdom, under the reigns of the three last sovereigns of Valois. Every noblemen had his followers, whose numbers bore a proportion to the power and consequence of their patron. Tavannes says, that at the death of Henry the Second, the Constable of Montmorenci, on his retreat to his own house, was abandoned by at least a hundred gentlemen, who had always been accustomed to follow in his train[c]. The greater number of these individuals ranged themselves under the protection of the Guises, who then became possessed of ministerial authority. We may judge how much the royal dignity was obscured and enfeebled by the adherence of so many retainers to their respective lords, from the relation left us by Brantome. "At the de- "cease of Francis the Second," says he, "I "was at Orleans, and was a witness to the "devotion of the whole court to the Duke of "Guise. Seven or eight days after that event,

Retainers.

Numbers of them, about the nobility.

The Guises.

[c] Tavannes, p. 220.

"he

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" he went on a pilgrimage to Clery, on foot: " he was accompanied by almost all the no- " bility and courtiers; the new King remaining " nearly alone, chagrined and jealous at such " a preference." [f]

Entrance of the Duke of Guise into Paris.

Even in the following year 1561, after the Duke's retreat from court, to the protection of his castles in Champagne; when, at the earnest solicitation of the Queen-mother, he re-appeared at Paris, he arrived at the head of a band of followers, which impressed respect and terror. Brantome, who composed one of the number, and who attended him to the levee of Charles the Ninth, describes his dress, arms, and behaviour on that occasion. They were such as Sylla, or the first Cæsar might have adopted, when entering Rome; and bore no resemblance to the humility of a subject approaching the foot of the throne. Cæsar Borgia could not have taken greater precautions for his personal preservation, against treachery or violence on the part of his enemies. " Besides his sword," adds Brantome, " I saw him order three daggers to " be brought into his closet, of which he se- " lected the sharpest."—" He was mounted " on a black gennet, and accompanied by " three or four hundred gentlemen [g]." It must be confessed, that so formidable a train seemed more calculated to shake, than to confirm the crown, on the head of the young King. The great Earl of Warwick, surnamed *the*

[f] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 77.

[g] Ibid. p. 85.

King.

King-maker, when he waited on Henry the Sixth, or on Edward the Fourth, in London, did not inspire more apprehension, than Francis, Duke of Guise excited, a century later, at Paris.

Many of these unfortunate retainers starved in the service of the princes or grandees, to whom they devoted themselves. Coconas, who was put to death in 1574, for a species of conspiracy to procure the escape of Francis, Duke of Anjou; says in his confession, that "he had "been eight years a retainer of the Duke, "without having ever received from him in the "course of that time, wherewithal to purchase "himself even a hat[h]." Henry the Third, from being the sovereign of a great people, became only the head and chief of a band of gentlemen, who filled the court with continual disputes, caused by their insolence or temerity. His brother, and all the principal nobles, had in like manner their partizans. It was deemed an object of exultation or triumph, to seduce each other's adherents. Epernon, who rose to such a point of favor and grandeur, towards the end of Henry's reign, was himself originally in the service of the Duke of Anjou; as were Maugiron, Livarot, and others of the royal minions[i]. When a forced reconciliation took place in the King's presence, between Bussy d'Amboise and a gentleman named St. Fal, in 1577; the former had the audacity to enter the palace of the Louvre itself, attended

Poverty and dependance of the retainers.

Their insolence.

Bussy d'Amboise.

[h] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 371.
[i] Vie de Marg. p. 232.

by

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by above two hundred determined and devoted friends. Henry the Third, though he expressed his indignation at the act, but did not venture to attempt its repression or punishment. Bussy even augmented the train of his followers, during his stay in the capital, as constituting his best protection and security against the vengeance of his sovereign, whom he braved and defied in a public manner[k]. These attendants formed in fact the only effectual preservative from assassins and murderers[l]. We find the Duke of Epernon in 1585, on his setting out to visit the King of Navarre, carrying with him in his train, above five hundred gentlemen; and at his appearance before the King his master at Chartres, after the flight of Henry from Paris, he was surrounded by as numerous a band[m]. The great nobles became almost independant of the crown, and maintained, each, a sort of separate court, protected by their armed followers. In 1588, the Duke of Nevers offered to arm and pay one hundred gentlemen, at his own expence, for three years, to serve against the Protestants[n] Henry the Third found himself equally incapable of carrying on war with vigor, or of supporting his own authority in time of peace.

Epernon.

Spies. Their numbers.

The treachery and violation of faith which characterized the age, gave birth to a race of men who infested society, and who derived a subsistence from betraying the secrets of those, with whom they lived in habitual confidence.

[k] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. 399 and 400. [l] Vie de Marg. p. 166.
[m] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 86, and p. 198.
[n] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 75.

Spies became one of the principal engines of state under Catherine of Medicis, and she expended considerable sums for their maintenance about the persons of all those, whom she either feared or distrusted. So pernicious a practice tended eminently to destroy mutual confidence, friendship, and fidelity. We find that no rank, birth, or situation, elevated the possessor above assuming the odious office of a spy. Bellegarde, though a Marshal of France, condescended to act so base a part about the person of Damville, at the persuasion of the court[o]. The Queen-dowager usually retained in her immediate pay, from twenty to thirty; all of whom were, as might be naturally expected, the most depraved and abandoned of mankind[p]. She even entertained them in the household of her own sons; and Cosmo Ruggieri, a Florentine, who pretended to a knowledge of magic, served in that capacity, near the Duke of Alenson. He betrayed her to that prince, divulged all her secrets, and in 1574 became involved in the conspiracy of la Mole and Coconas[q]. The Italian adventurer who still holds France in subjection, has improved and extended in a degree not to be conceived, the detestable practice of "Espionnage;" a term for which, to the honor of the English language and nation, we have no corresponding synonimous word. The whole French people, under Bonaparte's iron rule,

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Ruggieri.

[o] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 528.
[p] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 45.
[q] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 376.

may

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may be said without a metaphor, to form spies upon each other; an abyss of moral degradation unknown to the same extent, under any of the Dynasties which have reigned in that country since Clovis.

Charles the Ninth employed a lady of the Queen of Navarre, to watch her actions, and received from her regular information respecting his sister's conduct. Many of the original letters, addressed by this female Argus to the King, are yet preserved[r]. Margaret informs us, that she herself, at the pressing solicitation of her brother, the Duke of Anjou, who became afterwards Henry the Third, undertook and executed the employment of a confidential spy over her mother and Charles the Ninth. It ought not to be forgotten, as it forcibly marks the corruption of the times, that when she accepted the task, she had scarcely completed her seventeenth year[s]. Nor were these agents of a perfidious and unprincipled policy, confined to France. All the courts and cabinets of Europe were filled with the emissaries of Catherine, and of Henry the Third. In 1574, we find her writing to the French embassador in England, enjoining him to send over a spy, named Jannoton, to the camp of William, Prince of Orange, in Flanders; and specifying his annual appointments, which were fixed at twelve hundred Livres[t]. It appears

Margaret of Valois.

Foreign spies.

[r] Depôt de Bethune, Manus. 8676, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. p. 102.

[s] Vie de Marg. p. 18—22.

[t] About fifty pounds. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 419.

from

from the letters of the King to the same minister in 1577, that he maintained numbers of secret agents and pensioners in the court of Elizabeth.[u]

Duels.

One of the greatest scourges of the time, may justly be accounted the rage for duels, which prevailed universally among men of quality and condition. The continual practice of arms, the facility of obtaining pardon from the sovereign, and the debility of the laws, carried the evil to its utmost height. La Noue declares, that if a calculation had been made of the number of gentlemen who perished every year in these encounters, it would be found that many battles had been fought, with less effusion of generous blood[x]. Under the predecessors of Henry the Third, duels, however frequent or fatal they might be, were at least limited to the two persons between whom cause of quarrel had arisen. But during his reign originated the mode of involving in the effects of the dispute, the seconds and friends on either side. The first introduction of so absurd, as well as destructive a custom, was exhibited in the memorable duel which took place in 1578, between Quelus and Entragues. The former favorite repaired to the place of action, near the Bastile, attended by two others of the royal minions, Maugiron and Livarot. With Entragues, in like manner came Schomberg and Riberac. "These six champions,"

Frequency of them.

Seconds.

Quelus and Entragues.

[u] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 508.

[x] La Noue, Douzieme Disc. p. 244.

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says De Thou, "met at break of day, and engaged in deep silence[y]." With such desperation was the conflict continued, that four of the six expired either on the spot, or in a few days afterwards. They wore no defensive arms, but fought with the sword and dagger. Brantome, who has left us a minute relation of the event, compares it to the combat of the Horatii and the Curiatii under Tullus Hostilius, in the fabulous ages of Rome and Alba. He asserts that Entragues, who killed his antagonist Quelus, and who alone of the two survivors escaped unwounded, owed his advantage and preservation to the circumstance of having armed himself with a dagger; whereas his adversary was destitute of any weapon except the sword[z]. Instead of exerting the force of the laws, in order to repress and punish so audacious an infraction of them in the midst of his own capital, the King abandoned himself to the emotions of unmanly and unbecoming grief for the loss of his favorites.[a]

Impunity of duels.

This extraordinary combat formed not the only instance of its kind, which distinguished the period before us. Biron, son to the first Marshal of that name, and who suffered capital punishment for his treasonable conspiracies against Henry the Fourth, in the beginning of the seventeenth century; fought, at an early period of his life, a similar duel with the Prince

Biron, and

[y] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 726.
[z] Brant. Les Duels, p. 99—101.
[a] L'Etoile, p. 28. Brant. Les Duels, ibid.

of

of Carency. Two seconds on either side, who not only stood completely unconnected with the dispute between the principals, but who were intimately acquainted, and in habits of general friendship; joining in the fray, betrayed equal animosity. We may judge of the mutual fury which animated the combatants, when we find that they met at day-light, in the midst of a storm of snow, which drove with so much violence as almost to intercept the sight. The precautions taken by them to prevent a discovery were such, that no spectators intruded, except some accidental passengers. Biron and his two seconds having with great address, taken their ground in a manner to avail themselves of the snow, which was driven in the faces of their adversaries, laid them all three dead on the ground. No legal proceeding or prosecution of any kind, seems to have been instituted against the victorious survivors [b]. The slightest cause, even a word carelessly or unguardedly uttered, a look, or a gesture, were held sufficient to produce a challenge. No age, however advanced, or rank, however elevated, exempted from their acceptance. La Chasnaye, who was killed by Sourdiac, in a duel, under Henry the Second, had attained his eightieth year [c]. In order to prevent every kind of deceit, and to obviate the suspicion of wearing concealed armor, it was customary to fight with-

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Carency.

Circumstances of that duel.

not correct

Other instances.

[b] De Thou, vol. ix. p. 592 and 593. Brant. Les Duels, p. 102—104. La Noue, p. 246 and 247.

[c] Brant. Les Duels, p. 259—261.

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out other covering than their shirts. In 1579, Bussy d'Amboise and Angeau, for a trifling difference, fought two gentlemen at Alenson in Normandy: they were all four destitute of any dress except shirts. [d]

History of Vitaux.

The most formidable duellist of the age, was the Baron de Vitaux. As he was equally dextrous, experienced, and intrepid, numbers of gentlemen in every part of France, had fallen victims to his superior skill. His vengeance knew no limit: even Henry the Third trembled at the prowess and desperate resolution of one of his own subjects [e]. His renown became such, that it spread over all Europe; and foreigners who visited France, were anxious to see a champion so fortunate, as well as celebrated [f]. After having been compelled to fly into Italy, in order to escape the punishment ready to be inflicted on him for the various lives which he had destroyed; he ventured to return to Paris in 1573, on a new project of revenge. With a view to facilitate this object, he concealed himself, suffered his beard to grow to an unusual length, and assumed the disguise of a lawyer. Millaud, a gentleman who had murdered the Baron's brother, was then resident in the metropolis. Vitaux, accompanied by two brothers of the name of Boucicaut, who were called his lions, having watched the moment when his enemy was passing through one of the princi-

His exploits,

[d] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 105.
[e] Busbeq. Letter 22. p. 140.
[f] Brant. Les Duels, p. 119.

pal

pal streets, attended by five or six men; attacked him, left him dead on the ground, and effected his escape. Being taken, he was confined; but by the powerful intercession of his friends, obtained a pardon [g]. Ten years afterwards, the son of Millaud, who had attained to manhood, and who nourished an ardent desire to avenge his father's death, demanded reparation of Vitaux. They met without the walls of Paris, cloathed in their shirts only, armed with a sword and poniard. There the Baron, abandoned by his good fortune, and rendered careless by his contempt for so young an adversary, having received a mortal wound, expired immediately on the spot. [h]

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and death.

Rage for duels.

It is in the memoirs of d'Aubigné that we may see depictured, in the strongest colors, the extravagancies and acts of temerity, by which the gentlemen of his time were characterized. They cheerfully incurred the greatest expences, and made the longest or most tiresome journeys, in order to meet in their shirts, and decide their differences with the sword. D'Aubigné himself rode from the vicinity of Orleans, to Castlegeloux in Gascony, across a great portion of France, to fight la Magdelaine; with whom his chief reason for quarrelling appears to have been, the reputation acquired by the latter; he having dispatched eight gentleman in single combat, without losing a drop

[g] Brant. Les Duels, p. 120—124.

[h] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 165. Brant. Les Duels, p. 116—118. Busbeq. p. 138—141.

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of blood. This passion for duels, by one of the inconsistencies so common in human nature, was not incompatible with fervent piety. D'Aubigné, on the point of meeting la Magdelaine, says, that he rose early, and prayed devoutly to God. It is certain that his inflexible adherence to his religious principles and professions, proved highly injurious to his fortune, no less than to his elevation in life. [i]

Mixture of religion and revenge.

Under Francis the First, duels had been comparatively unknown: the manners of the nation, more simple, were far more pure; while the royal authority sustaining the laws, repressed the licentiousness which afterwards grew up under three reigns of minority, conspiracies, and civil war [k]. Some weak and ineffectual efforts for setting limits to so pernicious a practice, were made by Henry the Third in 1579; but as they appeared rather calculated for reconciling, than for punishing the parties engaged in quarrels, little advantage accrued from the attempt [l]. In 1588, at the convocation of the States by that Prince, Montholon, keeper of the seals, in his speech to the assembly, enumerating the national evils that called for redress, insisted strongly upon the impiety and destructive consequences of the practice of duelling. But no measures were taken to produce a reformation, or to punish those who persisted in the open infraction of the laws. [m]

Supineness of government.

[i] D'Aub. Mem. p. 75—77.
[k] La Noue, p. 244 and 245. Brant. Les Duels, p. 182.
[l] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 608.
[m] De Thou, vol. x. 386. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 92.

The

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The gratification of revenge, one of the strongest passions of the human mind, when un-controlled by the terror of punishment; was not even restrained in every instance, by the finer ties of honor, gratitude, or affection. Assassination and murder, tacitly, if not openly sanctioned by the sovereign, exhibited scenes of horror, over which, from their publicity it is not possible to draw a veil, the bare narration of which, excite equal abhorrence and incredulity. It forms one of the most hideous, as it constitutes one of the most prominent features of the time under our contemplation. We are only at a loss, in the multitude of facts which present themselves, to select those calculated for depicturing the spirit and temper of the age, in its strongest point of view. Can we in fact be surprized that individuals should gratify to its utmost extent, their resentment, jealousy, or hatred, when we know that Charles the Ninth himself encouraged and employed assassins [n]? Catherine of Medicis, and her son the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the Third, did not hesitate to suborn, and to instruct Maurevel, who under their immediate directions, aimed the balls at Coligni, by which he was wounded in 1572, previous to the massacre of Paris. Five thousand crowns were stipulated as the reward for the assassination of the admiral, which Maurevel undertook some years earlier, at the personal solicitation of Charles the Ninth. Unable to find a favorable occasion for his pur-

Assassinations.

Maurevel.

[n] Vie de Marg. p. 31 and 48.

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pose, and continually baffled by the precautions which Coligni took for his security, he determined to merit the protection of the court, by a service of importance, though of inferior magnitude. Having joined the Hugonot army, he was there received and protected by Vaudré, Sieur de Mouy, one of the bravest and most distinguished officers of the Protestant forces. That generous, unsuspecting friend, divided with Maurevel, his bed, his table, and his purse. But, so many acts of hospitality and affection, neither made an impression on his heart, nor delayed the execution of his design. Having availed himself of the same opportunity which enabled Martialis to stab Caracalla, he fired a pistol-ball into his benefactor's reins, and immediately effected his escape to the Catholics, mounted on a horse which Mouy had presented him. The most debased and depraved period of the Byzantine annals, when human nature seems to have sunk to the lowest ebb of degradation, scarcely presents features more horrid than do the reigns of the last princes of Valois. °

Assassins employed by sovereign princes.

In the extraordinary confession made by Henry the Third, when King of Poland, to one of his confidents at Cracow, relative to the causes of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which is preserved in the Memoirs of Villeroy; we read with amazement that he himself, having caused to be brought into his presence

° Memoires de l'Etat de France, sous Charles 9me, tome ii. p 32. Confession de Sancy, p. 511—513.

a Gas-

a Gascon officer, addressed him in these words: "Captain, the Queen my mother and I have "selected you from among all our good ser- "vants, as a man of valor and courage, proper "to conduct and execute an enterprize which "we meditate: it only consists in directing a "determined blow at a person whom we will "name to you. Consider therefore, whether "you have the boldness to undertake it. Favor "and means shall not be wanting; and be- "sides, a recompence worthy the most signal "service which can be rendered us [p]." Maurevel was notwithstanding afterwards preferred, as being a more cool and tried assassin. The relation of Henry's conversation with the Gascon captain, forms perhaps the only authentic record of such a proposition, made by a sovereign, to an individual, preserved in modern history; and forcibly reminds us of the beautiful scene in Shakespeare's King John, where that Prince tempts Hubert to murder young Arthur. In the present instance its enormity is augmented, when we consider that his own mother Catherine of Medicis was present at, and a party to so detestable a machination. It seems scarcely possible to carry further depravity and crime. The King of Navarre, when examined before the Queen-dowager and the council of state, assembled in the Louvre, on the 18th of April, 1574, declared, that he had received certain

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Confession of Henry the Third.

Reflections on it.

[p] "Discours d'Henry III. a un Personnage d'Honneur," in the second volume of the Memoires de Villeroy, p. 59—66.

infor-

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information of the King of Poland's having ordered du Gua, to kill him at all events.[q]

1574—1589. Duke of Guise.

We find that Charles the Ninth, in 1570, when irritated at the Duke of Guise's pretensions to the hand of his sister, Margaret of Valois, ordered his natural brother, the Count of Angouleme, to be called, and said to him; "Of those two swords which thou seest before "thee, one is destined for thy own execution, "if to-morrow, when I go to the chace, thou "dost not stab the Duke of Guise." The Count cheerfully undertook the employment, but he had not the courage requisite for its execution; and the Duke, by retiring from court, averted the fury of the King[r]. Lignerolles, a gentleman of the household of the Duke of Anjou, whose only crime consisted in his having been entrusted by his master, with the destructive intentions of Charles the Ninth respecting the Hugonots; was murdered in open day, by the command of his own sovereign, while on a party of amusement[s]. Even when expiring in 1574, that ferocious Prince, with the advice and approbation of his mother, dispatched two famous assassins, St. Martin and Maurevel, into Poitou, on the specific commission to murder La Noue, one of the Protestant leaders, who had survived the carnage of St. Bartholomew[t]. Brantome owns, that Maurevel was

Lignerolles.

[q] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 373.
[r] Vie de Marg. p. 31.
[s] Ibid. p. 48.
[t] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 55.

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commonly designed by the appellation of "Le Tueur du Roi:" the King's cut-throat.[u]

Encouragement, given by Henry the Third to crimes.

Henry the Third, when he became King of France by the decease of Charles the Ninth, though less furious in his rage than his predecessor had been, was not restrained by any sentiments of virtue, or by any principles of honor. The most enormous crimes found not only protection, but derived encouragement from a monarch, abandoned to dissolute pleasures, and corrupted by the most flagitious examples. If he did not, like his brother, command, he secretly instigated to their commission. The Count of Montsoreau, who assassinated Bussy d'Amboise in 1579, was indirectly exhorted by his sovereign, to revenge himself for the injuries which he had received from that insolent favorite; and the most complete impunity followed the perpetration of the murder[x]. Some years before, he had sent a detachment of his own guards, to seize and drown Madame de Thorigny, a lady belonging to the court of his sister, the Queen of Navarre. She was rescued from the hands of the assassins, at the instant when, having bound her, they were about to fulfil their orders[y]. To the generous delays and expostulations interposed by Souvré, it was owing that the order issued by Henry in 1575, to strangle the Marshals Montmorenci

Instances.

[u] Brantome, vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 165.

[x] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 90. L'Etoile, p. 37—39. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 498.

[y] Vie de Marg. p. 160.

and

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and Cossé, then prisoners in the Bastile, was not instantly carried into execution[z]. Mahomet the Second, or Solyman the Second, the Turkish Sultans, could not exercise over their subjects, more remorseless cruelty, than did the two last kings of the race of Valois.

Poison.

Henry the Third received positive information, that his own brother, the Duke of Alenson, had attempted to destroy him, by soliciting his valet to scratch him on the nape of the neck with a poisoned pin, at the time when he was adjusting the King's ruff[a]. Being soon afterwards suddenly seized with a violent and acute pain in his ear, and not doubting that it proceeded from poison administered by his brother's order, or with his approbation; Henry, in a paroxism of rage, commanded the King of Navarre, who became afterwards Henry the Fourth, to put Alenson to death. But that generous and magnanimous Prince refused to execute the commission, notwithstanding that it would have removed the only obstacle to his eventually ascending the throne of France. Though Henry the Third speedily recovered, yet his detestation of the supposed author of his late attack, remained too deeply rooted, to be ever eradicated from his mind. Of these particulars it is not possible to doubt, because they depend on the testimony of Henry the Fourth himself, whose veracity was never impeached, even by his enemies. They convey a

[z] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 292. Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 81, 82.
[a] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 79.

faithful

faithful, though a disgusting picture, of the atrocious manners of that age[b]. The accusation of poison was soon afterwards retorted on the King, by his brother[c]. Eteocles and Polynices, in the Theban history, were not inflamed with a more inextinguishable antipathy and animosity towards each other, than mutually animated Henry the Third and the Duke of Alenson, at this period of their lives.

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The Chancellor Chiverny assures us, that in 1575, the Duke of Alenson gave directions to one of his most confidential captains, to assassinate him on the road from Paris to Chatelherault in Poitou: he adds, that he owed his life to the accidental circumstances of the murderer arriving too late to execute the commission[d]. It is not the only instance which might be produced, of that Prince's guilt and criminal intentions. Even parricide did not restrain him, when irritated or incensed. Catherine of Medicis, his own mother, declared to the Cardinal of Bourbon, that she feared to approach her son's bed, on the night when La Mole his favorite was executed, lest he should plunge a dagger in her breast[e]. He was nevertheless surpassed in atrocity, by his sister, Margaret of Valois. De Thou positively asserts, that in 1575 she persuaded and induced by her eloquence, the celebrated Baron de Vitaux to per-

Chiverny.

[b] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 79—81.
[c] Ibid. p. 106, 107.
[d] Memoires de Chiverney, vol. i. p. 63.
[e] Memoires de Nevers, vol. i. p. 177.

petrate

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petrate the murder of Du Gua, then the favorite of Henry the Third. The crime was rendered more detestable, from the deliberate cruelty with which it was accompanied. Du Gua, unarmed, and employed in reading in his bed, fell an easy victim to the vengeance of his implacable enemy [f]. It forms a circumstance which ought not to be omitted, because it paints in all its horror, the savage spirit of the times; that the murderer having executed the object of his commission, was descending the staircase, in order to make his escape, when he was met by a lady, who lived in a criminal intimacy with Du Gua. He had the barbarity to wipe his sword, still reeking with the blood of her lover, on the apron of the unfortunate mistress. [g]

Du Gua. His murder.

Enormities of the Queen of Navarre.

Even though we should incline to acquit the Queen of Navarre of having instigated the assassination of Du Gua, it is not possible to doubt of her having sent persons in 1583, to murder a messenger of Henry the Third, who was on his way to Rome, with dispatches from the King to his favorite, the Duke of Joyeuse [h]. Indignant at so audacious an act of violence perpetrated upon a royal courier, Henry drove her from his court and capital, with public marks of ignominy. But her future life was distinguished even to a late period, by a repetition of similar enormities. Such was the con-

[f] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 300—302.

[g] Vie de Marg. p. 165—169. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 58. Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 106—109.

[h] Vie de Marg. p. 343. Busbeq. Letter, 22, p. 135.

tagion of the times, that even Henry the Fourth himself was not, it would seem, entirely free from its influence. He is accused, though perhaps unjustly, of having proposed to the Duke of Alenson to strangle Catherine of Medicis, in the Louvre, with their own hands. This proposition is said to have been made in 1574, at a time when the two princes regarded their own execution as imminent, on account of La Mole's conspiracy[j]. D'Aubigné likewise asserts that the King of Navarre, incensed against him for the freedom of his remonstrances, embraced the resolution of causing him to be poignarded and thrown into the river Gave, which runs by the city of Pau. If there be no exaggeration in these facts, it may serve to prove how universal had become the depravity of manners, and how difficult it was to escape the infection.[k]

St. Megrin.

In 1578, St. Megrin, one of the minions of Henry the Third, was attacked and murdered, close to the palace of the Louvre, in the midst of Paris, by a band of assassins, whom the Duke of Guise had employed to revenge the honor of his bed, which it was supposed that St. Megrin had attempted with success. The Duke of Mayenne, Guise's own brother, did not hesitate to put himself at the head of this troop of ruffians, and to lend his personal assistance in so foul a transaction[l]. Some years afterwards in 1587, he

[j] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 352.
[k] D'Aub. Mem. p. 62 and 63.
[l] L'Etoile, p. 30 and 31.

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committed an act still more detestable, by stabbing with his own hand, Sacremore, one of his officers and adherents, who demanded with too much warmth or importunity, the reward promised to his long and faithful services[m]. Wherever we turn our view at this period, we find only similar crimes, and similar impunity.

Sacremore.

Ornano. His history, and crimes.

It cannot excite surprize, that the nobility and inferior orders of people, should imitate the example set them by the sovereign. San Pietro Ornano, a Corsican of a noble family, in the service of France, equally renowned for his personal courage and his brutal ferocity; having married a Genoese lady of quality, whose virtue was not inferior to her birth, yet had the barbarity to put her to death on the most unjust pretences. Approaching her for that purpose with every external demonstration of affected respect and humility, after entreating her pardon on his knee, for the act that he was about to commit, he deliberately applied the cord to her neck, and strangled her with his own hands. Instantly quitting Marseilles, where he had perpetrated the crime, he arrived at court; displayed his breast, covered with scars and wounds received in battle; treated the murder as a private family transaction, with which public justice had no concern; and to the dishonor of human nature, obtained his pardon from Charles the Ninth[n]. During the

[m] Lettre d'Henry IV. in the tenth vol. of Voltaire, p. 231. L'Etoile, p. 106.

[n] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. i. p. 231.

resi-

residence of Henry the Third at the castle of Poitiers in 1577, a scene, if possible still more inhuman, was acted in that place. The Count de Villequier, first gentleman of the King's bed-chamber, who had been formerly his governor, having received information of his wife's infidelity to his bed, stabbed her at her toilet, while she embraced his knees, and supplicated for forgiveness. The crime was considered as peculiarly indecent, from the circumstance of its having been committed in the personal residence of the sovereign, where her person should have been secure from violence; and no less detestable, as the unfortunate Countess was far advanced in a state of pregnancy. Villequier nevertheless obtained not only his immediate pardon, but the King was accused of having instigated, or at least of having secretly approved the murder[o]. In the long list of assassinations with which the annals of that Prince's reign are crouded, we find scarcely a single instance of the criminal being brought to justice, except in the solitary example of La Bobettiere, a Hugonot gentleman of Poitou, who was beheaded in 1579, for having put to death his wife and her lover, with circumstances of peculiar treachery, as well as malignity. He was beheaded in the Place de Greve, at Paris[p]. We may however reasonably doubt whether La Bobettiere's religion did not

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Villequier.

Impunity of murders.

La Bobettiere.

[o] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 749. Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 82 and 83. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 756—758.

[p] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 107 and 108.

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principally constitute, or at least aggravate his offence. Even those who were not secure of impunity and pardon in the court of France, found an asylum in that of Navarre. In 1578, Lavardin having killed his rival in cold blood, was received with open arms at Nerac, whither he fled for shelter and protection.[q]

Poison.

A crime still more odious, because silent and concealed, though from its nature and symptoms, more ambiguous or equivocal, followed in the train of assassination. Poison began to be known, and even to be studied as a science, after the commencement of the civil wars. It would be endless to enumerate the persons of the highest condition and quality, supposed to have perished by this means, between the accession of Francis the Second, and the conclusion of the reign of Henry the Third; a period of only thirty years. Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre; Charles the Ninth; the Princess of Condé, Mary of Cleves; the Cardinal of Lorrain; Francis, Duke of Alenson; Henry, Prince of Condé; Marshal Bellegarde, and a number of other illustrious personages, were all believed by their contemporaries, to have been dispatched by poison. Malignity and credulity unquestionably invented or exaggerated the symptoms of their diseases, in the majority of these instances. Counterpoisons, preservatives, and antidotes, were eagerly sought after by the great, and commonly vended by the

[q] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 93.

needy

needy or the profligate. The Bezoar stone was long believed to possess the virtue of expelling, or counteracting the most violent poisons. Ambrose Paré, a man of superior talent, was among the first who exposed and confuted that pretension, by causing the Bezoar stone to be both externally applied, and administered internally to a criminal, who had previously taken a dose of corrosive sublimate. The experiment was made in 1565, at the town of Clermont in Auvergne, by order of Charles the Ninth, then only about fifteen years of age, to whom a Spanish noblemen had brought and presented a Bezoar stone. The unfortunate culprit, already sentenced to die, gladly accepted the commutation of his punishment, in order to procure a chance of life. The antidote was given him almost immediately after he had swallowed the poison, but ineffectually, as he expired within seven hours, in violent agonies; and the King, convinced by so incontestable a proof, of the inefficacy of the medicine, commanded it to be thrown into the fire.[r]

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589. Antidotes. The Bezoar stone.

The credulity of the age, together with their general ignorance of natural philosophy, gave encouragement to numbers of persons who pretended to a knowledge of magic and judicial astrology. The art was even reduced to rules, and privately taught as a branch of education. D'Aubigné informs us, that while he resided at Lyons in 1565, being then

Magic. Study of it.

[r] Œuvres de Paré, p. 506, 507.

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about fifteen years old, he applied to mathematics, and to the first elements of magic; though he adds, with a resolution never to avail himself of the latter knowledge [s]. It is difficult to guess what he means by "the "first elements of magic:" they are certainly unknown in the present times. Ambrose Paré, though one of the most enlightened men of the age in which he lived, and superior, as we have seen, to many of the vulgar superstitions then received, yet expressly admits the existence of magic, and the intervention of evil spirits. He classes the magicians under their respective heads, enumerates many instances of their communication with demons, and in particular, one proof to which he was an eye-witness, in the presence of Charles the Ninth [t]. The pretensions set up by Schrepfer at Dresden, about forty years ago, were nearly similar; and like the Magician of Paré, Schrepfer exhibited a specimen of his art or power of evoking the shades of the dead, in presence of an Electoral Prince of Saxony, and a numerous company, who certainly did not detect the imposture, or ascertain how the deception was effected.

Ruggieri.

Cosmo Ruggieri, the celebrated Florentine, who was sentenced to work in the gallies, for his participation in the plot of 1574; if he did not obtain his liberty, attracted at least to himself the utmost consideration and re-

[s] Memoires de d'Aub. p. 17.
[t] Œuvres de Paré, p. 673.

spect,

spect, from his supposed acquaintance with magical secrets. Instead of being, like his companions, chained to the oar, he was permitted to enjoy his freedom, with only a guard of honor; and was even allowed to open a sort of academy for judicial astrology in Marseilles, which attracted pupils of every description [u]. Catherine of Medicis, from her anxiety to penetrate into a futurity, from the contemplation of which she ought rather to have averted her eyes; or in the vain hope of warding off imaginary dangers, extended her protection to every pretender to occult and supernatural powers. The capital and the kingdom were inundated with them, their credit eclipsing that of the wisest, or most pious theologians. They were said to amount in 1572, to no less incredible a number than thirty thousand [x]. Cabalistical words or characters were commonly worn, as preservatives against sickness or attack [y]. Medals, possessing magical virtue to excite affection or to preserve friendship, were equally supposed to exist. We find La Mole, the favorite of the Duke of Alenson, constantly wearing a medal, which he was assured would perpetuate towards him the affection of his master.[z]

Numbers of pretenders to skill in magic.

Cabalistical words,

and medals.

A circumstance still more singular is, that both medicine and surgery, professions which

Charms used in surgery.

[u] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 377.
[x] L'Etoile, p. 98. La Noue, p. 9.
[y] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 284.
[z] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 377.

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do not seem to have any natural connexion with magic, were nevertheless regarded as equally open to its supposed influence. "My "brother," says Brantome, "was wounded at "the siege of Metz, with three balls, two in "the neck, and one in the arm; of which "he would probably have died, if it had not "been for the aid of Doublet, the Duke of "Nemours' surgeon. He was regarded as "the most expert practitioner in France, and "every one had recourse to him, notwithstand-"ing that Ambrose Paré, so celebrated since, "was then in Metz. Doublet performed all "his cures, only with bandages of clean linen, "and plain water: but to those he added sor-"ceries and charmed words, as numbers of "persons now alive, who saw him, can affirm[a]."

Death of Francis Duke of Guise.

It is evident that Doublet trusted to nature alone for the cure of gunshot wounds, without surgical dressings or applications. His "Sor-"ceries and charmed words," were only addressed to the credulity of his patients, who attributed to their efficacy, the recovery which physical causes operated. He can hardly be blamed for accommodating his skill to the ignorance and prejudice of the age. John Hunter or Cheselden would probably have done the same, if they had lived in the sixteenth century, and had found that superior ability alone, unaided by empiricism, did not suffice to bring them into vogue. When Francis, Duke

[a] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 324 and 325.

of

of Guise, lay without hope of life, in the royal camp before Orleans, in 1563, from the consequences of the wound inflicted by Meré Poltrot, his assassin; St. Just d'Alegre, as Brantome informs us, undertook and offered to effect his recovery. Being brought to the Duke, he proposed to begin his dressings, which consisted in applications precisely similar to those of Doublet. But the Duke, conscious that he was beyond the reach of regular art, refused to have recourse to a mode of treatment which he regarded as impious. He did not, as it would seem, by any means despise, or call in question the ability of D'Alegre to restore him by the help of magic: he only expressed his readiness rather to die, if such was the will of God, than to prolong his life by enchantments. Brantome declares that he was present at the circumstance[b]. De Thou asserts that in 1582, Sancho d'Avila, one of the most renowned Spanish commanders of the sixteenth century, died of a wound which might have been easily healed by skilful applications. But, having had recourse to charms and sorcery, he fell into a languishing disease, of which he expired.[c] D'Avila.

Ambrose Paré relates many similar instances to which he was a witness, and which he exposed to public derision, in the manner that such impostures merited. During the siege of Metz in 1552, he was sent to visit a gentleman, whose leg had been fractured by a cannon ball.

[b] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 113 and 114.
[c] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 599.

 "I found

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" I found him," says Paré, " in bed, his leg " crooked and bent, without any dressing on " it; because a person had promised to cure " him, by only using certain words, taking his " name and belt. He had lain during four " days in exquisite pain, neither sleeping by " day or night, crying piteously. I laughed " at the pretended mode of cure, and imme- " diately dressed his leg. He recovered, and " is now alive[d]." The most curious recital of this kind, is to be found in another part of Paré's works. " At the siege of Hesdin in " 1553, the Count de Martigues, a nobleman " of the highest distinction, received a ball in " the lungs, of which he languished, with mor- " tal symptoms. Emanuel Philibert, Duke of " Savoy, who commanded the Spanish forces, " exerted every endeavour to prolong his life, " and caused him to be attended by the most " eminent surgeons of the two armies, after " the surrender of Hesdin. But, the wound " proved incurable. When it had been so pro- " nounced by Paré, and all the other practi- " tioners, a Spaniard presented himself, who " engaged on pain of death, to operate his re- " covery, provided that neither surgeon, apo- " thecary, nor physician, were permitted to " approach his patient. They were instantly " dismissed; and the Duke of Savoy sent a " gentleman to notify to Paré, that as he " valued his own life, he should not presume " to interfere further with the Count de Mar-

Count of Martigues.

[d] Œuvres de Paré, p. 787.

" tigues.

" tigues. He gladly obeyed, conscious that no efforts of art could effect the cure. The Spaniard then advancing, thus addressed his patient; 'My Lord, the Duke of Savoy has commanded me to come and dress thy wound. I swear to thee by God, that within eight days, I will enable thee to mount on horseback, lance in hand; provided that no other person approach thee, except myself. Thou shalt eat and drink every thing which is to thy taste: I will perform abstinence for thee; and of this thou may'st be assured on my promise. I have cured many who had worse wounds than thine.' The noblemen present answered, 'May God give thee grace!' He then desired to have a shirt of the Count de Martigues delivered to him, which he tore into little shreds, in form of crosses, mumbling and muttering certain words upon the wounds. Having dressed them, the Spaniard permitted him to eat and drink whatever he chose; repeating, that he would observe the requisite regimen in the Count's stead. He did so, only eating six small plumbs, and six bits of bread at his meals, and drinking simply beer. Nevertheless, two days afterwards, Count Martigues died; and the Spaniard seeing him in the agony of dissolution, made off with the utmost expedition. I believe, if he had been caught, the Duke of Savoy would have ordered him to be strangled[c]." It is not easy to pronounce whether this pretender to super-

Mode, used for his cure.

His death.

[c] Œuvres de Paré, p. 792.

" natural

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natural powers, was an impostor, or an enthusiast. During our own time, Mainedeuc, and various other practitioners of animal Magnetism, in this country; Cagliostro, as well as Mesmer, on the continent, have boldly laid claim to similar faculties of transferring pains or diseases, from the patients to themselves. But no fact can more strongly display the ignorance, credulity, and unacquaintance of the age under our review, with the principles of medicine, than their committing to bold and obscure empirics, the care of persons in extremity, when abandoned as hopeless by regular physicians.

During the siege of Jametz by the Duke of Lorrain in 1588, almost all the prisoners who fell into the governor's hands, were found to have about their bodies, cabalistical words or prayers written on vellum. They were believed to possess the virtue of protecting the wearer, from wounds or shot[f]. Brantome says, that he had known an infinite number of persons who wore such charms: "with some," adds he, "they succeeded; with others, they "had no effect[g]." As there were protecting, so there were destructive charms. Small waxen images, pricked or pierced about the heart, with magical words and ceremonies, were supposed to produce death. Such figures having been found in the house of La Mole, which, it was asserted, he had procured from Ruggieri,

Destructive charms. Waxen images.

[f] De Thou, vol. x. p. 226.
[g] Brant. Les Duels, p. 90.

in

in order to accelerate the progress and final effect of the disease, under which Charles the Ninth then labored; the unfortunate culprit did not deny that they were magical images: but he maintained that their virtue or efficacy was to excite love, and not to destroy life. He appealed to the testimony of the figures themselves, which were female, and protested his innocence. The court did not the less condemn him to expiate his imprudence on a scaffold. [h]

During the frenzy of the Parisians, and their hatred against Henry the Third, after the assassination of the Guises in 1589, they had recourse to sorcery, in order to rid themselves of a prince whom they considered as a tyrant. Their profane and impious rage rose to such a pitch, that even the priests did not scruple to place images upon the altars, which at every mass, they pricked; accompanied with incantations and invocations meant to destroy the King. Magical torches were extinguished, with similar ceremonies [i]. The chiefs of "the League" employed a more effectual instrument, the knife of Clement. Such was the credulity of the populace, that two candlesticks of costly workmanship, ornamented with the figures of satyrs, which had belonged to Henry; were produced and shewn to the audience, by one of the popular preachers, as being the familiar demons

[h] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 378 and 379. Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 73—75.

[i] Mem. pour ser. à l'Hist. de Fra. p. 270.

whom

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whom he was accustomed to invoke in his prayers. The imposture, however gross, did not prove the less successful with the multitude[k]. So much had the licentiousness or impiety of the times, produced impunity, that sorcery became, under the two last princes of Valois, a profession exercised without apprehension or disguise. Yet by a singular contradiction, we find, that in 1587, an Italian, named Dominique Miraille, seventy years of age, together with his mother-in-law, were hanged, and their bodies consumed to ashes, before the church of "Notre Dame," at Paris, for the pretended crime of magic. The punishment excited astonishment, not from its injustice or absurdity, but because it was novel and extraordinary.[l]

Credulity of the Parisians.

Horoscopes and calculations of nativity, were so common, that it became usual to draw them on the birth of all princes and sovereigns. The predictions of Michael of Salon, known more universally under the name of Nostradamus, attained peculiar celebrity in the sixteenth century. They were read and studied with the most implicit credulity; and as, like all oracular writings, they were couched in dark and ambiguous expressions, men saw, or fancied that they saw in them, every event which afterwards took place. This miserable impostor, who in the present age, would probably not attract attention in the Shetland Islands, or in the most superstitious portions of the High-

Horoscopes.

Calculations of Nostradamus.

[k] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 272 and 273.
[l] Ibid. p 218.

lands;

lands; was distinguished by the notice, and enriched by the bounty of Kings and Queens. Henry the Second, after admitting Nostradamus to his presence, and bestowing on him pecuniary gratifications, sent him to draw the Horoscope of his four sons. Catherine of Medicis shewed him similar proofs of distinction. Emanuel Philibert, and Margaret of France, Duke and Duchess of Savoy, visited him at Salon, a little town of Provence where he resided. Charles the Ninth, then only about fifteen years of age, imitating their example, presented him two hundred gold crowns, and named him one of the royal Physicians, with adequate appointments. He died in 1566, under the reign of that Prince. So lucrative was the profession of a pretender to occult science, or in common language, of a conjuror, during the period of time under our review! His predictions, conveyed in a poetic form under the denomination of "Centuries;" from their obscurity and mystical envelopement of phrase, may be made applicable to almost any events, resembling in that respect, the oracles of every age.

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589. Protection extended to him.

Jerome Cardan, who died at Rome in 1576, had filled Italy and Europe, with his astrological fame: but the merit of his other writings, however eminent, was lost in the attraction of his calculations. He had even the absurd impiety to draw the Horoscope of Jesus Christ; subjecting him to the chimerical laws, or motions of the celestial bodies, by which he

Cardan.

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he explained, and to which he referred, every sublunary event[m]. We must not however rank him with the Borris, the Swedemborgs, and the enthusiasts or visionaries common at all periods of time. Cardan, a native of Pavia in Italy, where he was born in 1501, might have attained to great celebrity, from his acquirements in philosophy, pharmacy, and astronomy. But, he laid claim to supernatural endowments; asserting, as Socrates is pretended to have done, that he was constantly accompanied by a familiar spirit or Demon. His works, abounding in metaphysical or cabalistical theories, astrological calculations, and polemical or theological topics of dispute; form a mass of distempered and eccentric composition, perhaps without parallel in modern literature. In the history of his own life, "De Vita propria," many curious facts are recorded, which bear some analogy with the "Confessions de Jean Jacques Rousseau." Both Cardan and Rousseau were indeed alienated to a certain degree in their understandings; but the former, infinitely more than the latter. It is difficult to believe, though the fact is not the less true, that Cardan allowed himself to expire of hunger and inanition, rather than falsify his own prediction. He had foretold, in consequence of having drawn his own Horoscope, that he should not survive his seventy-fifth year. Licentious in his manners, and addicted to almost every species of excess, we can only contemplate

Nature of his compositions,

and death.

[m] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 362.

Cardan

Cardan as a depraved, and insane man of genius.

The most philosophic and enlightened minds of that period, were not altogether superior to these vain and visionary studies. Astronomy and mathematics were implicated with astrology; sciences the most solid, lending their aid to sustain ignorance and fiction. We may see in many parts of the history of De Thou, that superior as he was to the age in which he lived, he yet had not been able to resist so general an infection[n]. La Noue, though he treats the study and practice of magic or astrology, as detestable, speaks of it as not the less real and unquestionable in itself[o]. Comets and meteors, or other Phenomena of the Heavens, which our knowledge of astronomy enables us to explain, or to view without apprehension; spread terror over whole kingdoms, and particularly alarmed princes, who considered them as presages of their own approaching dissolution[p]. Even in Milton's time, near a century later than the period under our review, such appearances still excited the same sensations, and eclipses shook the firmest minds with dismay. He has made allusion to these fears, in that beautiful passage of the first Book of "Paradise Lost," where he describes the sun,

Universality of a belief in predictions.

Comets. Terror produced by them.

——"from behind the moon beheld
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs."

[n] De Thou, p. 134.; vol. x. p. 215 and p. 667.
[o] La Noue, p. 8—11.
[p] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 593. Brant. vol. iv. Cap. Fran. p. 22.

Cathe-

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Catherine of Medicis.

Catherine of Medicis during her whole life, became the victim of her apprehensions; and avoided with anxious solicitude, every place where she fancied that her final destiny awaited her [q]. De Thou assures us, that having been admonished "to distrust St. Germain," she never could be induced to make other than a short stay, at the royal castle of that name in the vicinity of Paris; which she quitted precipitately, on perceiving the first symptoms of personal indisposition. She even carried her alarms to such a point, that the palace of the Louvre being situated in the parish of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, she abandoned it; and constructed a palace for herself at a vast expence, in another quarter of the capital. De Thou betrays his own conviction of the reality of the fact, by acquainting us that the prediction was accomplished at her death, because a theologian of the name of St. Germain, was called in to assist her during her last moments. [r]

Compacts with evil spirits.

Compacts with the evil spirit, whom we denominate the Devil, were regarded as not only possible, but common; the confessions of ignorant and credulous, or timid and superstitious wretches, who avowed such pretended communications, being considered even by the magistrates, as juridical proofs, and punished with exemplary severity [s]. The profession of a Demoniac, was at once lucrative and celebrated. The persons selected for personating the part, were usually women of obscure ex-

Demoniacs.

[q] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 639; and vol. x. p. 502.
[r] Ibid. vol. x. p. 502. [s] La Noue, p. 9.

traction,

traction, ignorant, and afflicted with violent nervous disorders, by which they were convulsed in a frightful manner. These fits were mistaken by the credulous, or superstitious spectators, for the infallible proofs of demoniacal possession. In 1565, a young woman of Vervins in Picardy, named Nicola Aubry, known in history by the title of "the Demoniac of Laön," was believed to be possessed by no less than thirty devils. Three of the most refractory, who could not be expelled by any ordinary exorcisms, were publicly compelled to evacuate their tenement, in presence of a prodigious multitude, assembled on the occasion. The scene of the deception, for such it can only be esteemed, was the cathedral of the city of Laön, where Nicola Aubry was exhibited on a theatre, expressly constructed to facilitate the view of the ceremony. She appears however to have received a complete cure. [t]

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Nicola Aubry.

About ten years afterwards, in 1575, a woman of the loosest life and most abandoned manners, was selected by Marshal Fervaques, as a proper subject for pretended possession. Having received instructions from the priest of the village of Bellouet, near Lisieux in Normandy, how to act the part; her deliverance from the supposed power of the infernal spirit, was magnified into a species of miracle. The shrine, before which this spiritual interposition was performed, became so famous, as to draw to

Other instances.

[t] Confess. de Sancy, p. 180, 181.

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it an incredible number of votaries, devotees, and pilgrims, from every part of France. It is hardly credible that in the short space of three years, near eighty houses, and fifty inns, for the reception and entertainment of those pious strangers, were constructed at Bellouet. When we consider the pecuniary advantages, which must have resulted from the concourse of such guests, we shall no longer wonder at the frequency and repetition of the imposture.[u]

It was generally supposed in the sixteenth century, that invisible beings or demons sometimes practising upon human weakness, assumed the shape of men and women; and under that form, might have the most intimate and criminal communication with persons of either sex. Fancy and terror amused themselves by decorating or personifying the creatures, which they had originally invented. The *Succubus*, and the *Incubus*, were not only believed to exist by the vulgar: men of the deepest learning, and of the most active talents, equally regarded them as real. "The Incubus," says Ambrose Paré, "are demons who transform "themselves into the shape of men, and co- "habit with sorceresses. The Succubus, "are demons, who in like manner assume the "appearance of women[x]." He cites, or relates examples of the fact, though in another place, he seems only to consider them as a species of the night-mare[y]. His understanding,

The Incubus,

and Succubus.

[u] Confess. de Sancy, p. 171, 172, and p. 180.

[x] Œuvres de Paré, p. 672.

[y] Ibid. p. 675, 676.

and his prejudices, which were evidently at variance, left him under a degree of uncertainty and indecision on the point. CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

The nuptial couch was in like manner believed to be invaded by supernatural agents, or rendered sterile by the operation of sorcery and magic. Numerous instances of this opinion might be produced, if the nature of the subject did not render it improper, and unbecoming the decency of history. Paré not only admits and maintains the existence of such charms or spells, as would debilitate, or incapacitate for the functions of marriage; but he declaims against them and their authors, in the most strenuous terms. He declares the persons capable of having recourse to such diabolical arts, in order to frustate the purposes of wedlock, enemies of God and man. Overborne by the universality of the belief, and deceived by some equivocal, or doubtful examples, he did not permit himself to examine whether they might not either be wholly fictitious, or merely the natural result of physical causes. Montaigne is far more philosophical in his opinions on the subject, though certainly at the expence of decency. [z] Nuptial spells.

Familiar spirits obtained equal belief, not only among the multitude, but with persons of every description [a]. Catherine of Medicis consulted Simeoni, an astrologer, on the choice of Familiar spirits.

[z] Œuvres de Paré, p. 676. Montaigne, Essays, chap. xx. p. 120. —136.

[a] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 325.

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1574—1589. Celebrity and vogue of Nostradamus.

a happy and auspicious day for Charles the Ninth's inauguration [b]. Papyre Masson assures us, that Nostradamus having drawn his Horoscope, predicted that his reign would prove sanguinary and unfortunate [c]. But, that author, though entitled to respect on many points which he discusses or examines, was not exempt from the credulity characteristic of the age. He flourished under the two last princes of Valois, as well as under Henry the Fourth, whom he survived; dying in 1611, soon after the accession of Louis the Thirteenth. His "Annals of "France," composed in Latin, though they do not place him on a level with De Thou, or with Mezeray; yet contain many interesting and curious facts relative to the French monarchy, not to be found in either of those historians. Nor ought we to be surprized that Papyre Masson should have been impressed with a belief in the predictions of Michael of Salon, when we reflect that neither Sully, nor De Thou, men of such superior understandings, could resist the impression made by similar pretenders to occult science. In the four lines composed by Nostradamus, which were considered as prophetic, or descriptive of Henry the Second's death in a tournament by the lance of Montgomery; it is impossible however to discover any thing, except a vague and fanciful allusion to a combat between two lions, in which one of them loses his eyes. But as the

[b] Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 102.
[c] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 21.

imagina-

imagination of his contemporaries was struck with the sudden and deplorable Catastrophé of that monarch, which became the signal and æra of the calamities of France; they eagerly seized on any casual resemblance, or imaginary similarity between the verses of Nostradamus, and the fate of the French Prince [d]. Ronsard, though he doubts of the source from which Nostradamus derived his prophetic powers, and leaves it undetermined whether the Deity, or the demon, inspired him in his predictions; yet professes his perfect conviction of the supernatural assistance extended to that impostor. [e]

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589. Prediction of Henry the Second's death.

Margaret of Valois, like her mother Catherine, was immersed not only in dissolute pleasures, but in magical pursuits and studies. She is described by a lady of her own household, in 1573, as Canidia is represented in Horace, surrounded wiih spells and incantations, invoking the aid of supernatural beings. A spy, who was placed by Charles the Ninth, about his sister, writes to him; "The Queen "of Navarre has been three days shut up, with "only three of her women. One of them "holds the two-edged sword; another, the "paste; and a third, the iron. She is con-"stantly in water, and burning incense like a "sorceress [f]. The Princess was only twenty years old at the time; but such were the occupations of the human mind in that age.

Spells.

Margaret of Valois.

[d] Biograph. Dict. art. "Nostradamus," vol. ix. p. 535.
[e] Œuvres de Ronsard, tom. ix. p. 36, 37.
[f] Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. ii. Recherches, p. 102.

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Sully himself, whom we are accustomed to consider as a model of loyalty and principle, yet owns that he founded his inviolable adherence to the King of Navarre, among other reasons, upon the positive assurances of La Brosse, his own preceptor, who early revealed to him, that the destinies had decreed the elevation of that prince to the throne of France. Nay, La Brosse had by his art ascertained, that as Henry and Sully were both born on St. Lucia's day, they would remain inseparably attached to each other, during their whole lives. Sully made no secret of so pleasing a piece of intelligence, to his master; who on his part, owned to Sully, that an astrologer having calculated the nativity of the Duke of Alenson, had, not without extreme reluctance, denounced to that prince, a premature and inglorious end; acquainting him at the same time, that the crown of France was reserved by fate for the King of Navarre. Sully lays the scene of this conversation as early as 1580, at a time when the events foretold, could only be considered at most as probable[g]. It is certain that a general opinion prevailed throughout France, during the reign of Henry the Third, that the sceptre would pass into the family of Vendome, or Bourbon[h]. This expectation was founded on more solid foundations, however, than Horoscopes and nativities. The debaucheries of Henry the Third, and of his brother

La Brosse. His predictions to Sully.

Expectation of the extinction of the house of Valois, general.

[g] Sully, vol. i. p. 31—33.
[h] Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 242.

Francis,

Francis, Duke of Alenson, who was not married; the virtue, together with the sterility of Louisa, wife to the former prince; the preceding decease of Francis the Second, and of Charles the Ninth, who both died without male issue; contrasted with the heroic, or amiable qualities of the young King of Navarre; — all these circumstances when combined, operated forcibly on the minds of the nation, and attracted their attention towards the great event which took place in 1589, by the assassination of Henry the Third. CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

It forms a singular coincidence of events, which seems neither to have struck De Thou, nor Mezerai, nor Henault, nor Voltaire; that the direct Capetian line, and the collateral or Valois branch, both expired in the persons of three brothers, who successively ascending the French throne, all died without male issue. Louis the Tenth, Philip le Long, and Charles le Bel, the three sons of Philip le Bel, after reigning each a short time, made way for Philip of Valois, in the fourteenth century: precisely as Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, the three sons of Henry the Second, preceded Henry of Bourbon, two hundred and sixty years afterwards. This similarity constitutes a curious historical fact.

Transmutation of metals.

The transmutation of metals, and the discovery of the philosopher's stone, formed another of the characteristic pursuits of that credulous age. Brantome informs us that Castelnau de Mauvissiere, a French gentleman of distinction, defrauded Emanuel Philibert, Duke

CHAP. VI.

1574—1589. Alchymists.

Grantrye.

His offers.

of Savoy, of above fifty thousand crowns, in the prosecution of this chimerical research [i]. We may see the implicit faith lent to the assurances of Alchymists and pretenders to occult science, in the depositions of the principal persons concerned in the conspiracy of 1574. It appears that Grantrye, who had been the embassador of Charles the Ninth to the republic of the Grisons, was to have been appointed Superintendant of the finances of the Duke of Alenson, "because he promised by his art to convert silver into gold, and by that expedient "to pay the Duke's army." [k] It is true that he wisely stipulated, at the same time, for his retreat into Switzerland, where he meant to produce the transmutation. Grantrye being examined before commissioners named for the purpose, declared that, "while he was resident "among the Grisons, he had employed himself "in distilling and transmuting metals; that he "had got possession of the secret, which he "would not communicate to any one except "the King, or those whom his majesty should "please to name." He added, "that he "could produce a million of crowns, every "year; the King only depositing fifty thou-"sand crowns in silver, in order annually to "gain five hundred thousand; and that the "profit might be drawn out monthly, or even "weekly, if it was thought proper [l]." These pretensions, sustained by some interest at court,

[i] Brant. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 112.
[k] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 376. [l] Ibid. p. 368

exempted

exempted Grantrye from the fate of his associates, who perished on the scaffold [m]. It would be easy to select many similar proofs of the belief reposed in pretenders to chymical secrets.

Pilgrimages. Pilgrimages formed a religious or superstitious observance, in the highest vogue under Henry the Third; who, as well as the Queen his wife, had recourse to them, with a view of obtaining issue. In 1579, he made a journey of this nature, to the shrine of *the Virgin* at Chartres, which had attained an extraordinary reputation for adducing aid in cases of sterility. In order to assist the effect of his prayers, he there received likewise two shirts, denominated from their supposed virtues, "Chemises de "notre Dame," which he carried back to Paris, for the use of the Queen and himself. They were commonly esteemed to be infallible recipés against barrenness [n]. As they proved however of no effect in this case, the King, after making vows to various saints, with a view of invoking their aid or intercession; in November 1582, had recourse to "our Lady of Liésse" in Champagne, who was supposed to preside over, and to shed her benediction in an especial degree, upon the nuptial couch. Abandoning for this object his royal duties, he repaired thither as a pilgrim [o]. Louisa of Vaudemont still continuing nevertheless without issue, their majesties twice in the following year renewed their suit to the Virgin, at Chartres. Supplications alone having

Shirts of our Lady.

Remedies for sterility.

[m] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 54. [n] L'Etoile, p. 35.
[o] Busbeq. Letters the 5th and 9th.

been

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been found ineffectual, they next tried the force of presents on her. An image of silver gilt, representing the Virgin herself, and weighing a hundred Marks, was offered by them at her shrine [p]. They continued nine days in devotion; repeating the experiment some months afterwards, when they presented a lamp of silver weighing forty Marks, together with lands to the amount of above twenty pounds Sterling annual rent, for the purpose of keeping it lighted day and night [q]. As the Virgin persisted to reject the royal supplications, we find the King in 1584, going with forty-seven companions, all on foot, dressed in the habit of penitents, first to Chartres, and afterwards to Clery, another celebrated shrine in the vicinity of Orleans. [r]

Presents to the Virgin.

Relics worn, for renovating beauty.

By a profanation which strongly characterizes the manners of that dissolute age, religion was made a vehicle for coquetry; and relics were worn by ladies, in order to counteract the ravages of time, or to renovate the attractions of beauty. It is not without astonishment, that we can reflect on the use to which some of them were applied. D'Aubigné assures us, that the maids of honor belonging to Catherine of Medicis, expressed the utmost anxiety to redeem from the sacrilegious hands of the Count de la Rochefoucault, a Hugonot, the girdle of St. Catherine of Sienna. This female decoration was kept at Tours, from whence the Protestants carried it off during the civil wars, under Charles the

[p] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 136.
[q] Ibid. p. 144. [r] Ibid. p. 175.

Ninth,

Ninth. Its virtue, which was of a singular, as well as precious kind, far surpassing any of the empyrical remedies so common in the present time, might well justify the maids of honor in Catherine's court. Those persons who used it, fondly believed that it could restore to the most beautiful part of the female form, its original firmness and loveliness, when lost by the effects of age or disease [s]. The Cestus of the Queen of Love, so famous in Greek antiquity, described by Homer, was not more powerful in its supposed effects.

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Despairing of effectual relief from any application of his own to the Virgin, Henry had recourse in 1582, to the sovereign pontiff, and demanded the publication of a Jubilee, in order to procure him offspring. Gregory the Thirteenth, who, as we may see in the letters and dispatches of De Foix, the French embassador, proved frequently very inflexible on ecclesiastical, or pecuniary matters; expressed the utmost readiness to oblige the French monarch on this point. He even offered voluntarily, to join his own prayers and supplications, to those of the King and the nation. With the intention of rendering them more efficient, the third week in Lent was selected, as a season peculiarly fitted for pious mortification; and the *Bull* promulgated for the purpose, enjoined every subject of France to unite in fervent addresses to Heaven [t]. In 1588, at the convocation of the States General, the Archbishop of Bourges, as

Jubilees.

Harangue of the

[s] Confess. de Sancy, p. 205.

[t] Lettres de Foix, p. 252 and 258, lettre 28.

pre-

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Archbishop of Bourges.

president of the clergy, observed in his harangue to the three orders, that "they ought all "to implore of the Divine goodness to with- "draw from the royal house, the opprobrium "of barrenness; to cast a favorable look upon "the person of the Queen, as he had formerly "done upon Anne, the mother of Samuel; "and to grant the King a numerous posterity "to inherit his dominions[u]." It would seem that the "shirts of our Lady" were apprehended to diffuse a protecting, as well as a generative virtue, over their wearers: for Brantome gravely discusses, whether a champion going to engage in a judicial combat, might, or might not be allowed to wear one of them. He treats them as a species of charm, or pious magic; and he concludes by declaring, that if one of the combatants be permitted to avail himself of their assistance, the advantage should be rendered common to both champions[x]. So little progress had the human mind made on many points, at the close of the sixteenth century, even among men of liberality, rank, and education.

Efficacy of charms.

Impediments to travelling.

We may naturally suppose, that during a period so agitated by every calamity of civil and of religious dissension, the intercourse from one part of the kingdom to another, must have been difficult, perilous, and interrupted. Posts, and post-horses, were indeed established throughout France; but the impediments to

[u] De Thou, vol. x. p. 396.
[x] Brant. Les Duels, p. 90.

travel-

travelling remained nevertheless very considerable. All communication with foreign countries, was frequently stopped by order of government, in time of profound peace; nor were even letters and couriers allowed to pass, or secure from arrest and inspection [y]. Henry the Second appointed Brusquet, his buffoon, post-master of Paris, which was evidently a very lucrative employment. Brantome informs us, that he kept commonly near a hundred horses standing ready for use, in the stables. It appears likewise, that the price paid by foreigners for them, was one-fifth part higher, than the sum given by native Frenchmen [z]. No assertions, however positive, can ever persuade us, that the intelligence of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was carried from Paris to Madrid, in three days and three nights. Yet Brantome, a contemporary, declares it in terms the most precise, and relates every circumstance attending the reception of the news by Philip the Second [a]. The western and southern provinces of France, in which lay the principal strength of the Hugonots; and where, of consequence, even during the intervals of civil war, the inhabitants remained always on the alert; were in fact hardly to be passed by any traveller, without an escort. Epernon, who was sent from Bourdeaux, with dispatches to Henry the Third at Blois, in 1576, with difficulty found means to pene-

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Posts. Their establishment.

Difficulty of passing from one part of France to another.

[y] Busbeq. Letter 8 and letter 15.
[z] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 289.
[a] Ibid. vol. iii. Cap. Fran. p. 169.

trate

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trate through the intermediate country, which owned neither sovereign, nor laws, nor police [b]. D'Aubigné, when he was dispatched by the King of Navarre, to the same prince, in 1584, during a period of nominal tranquillity; yet felt so much apprehension of being attacked or plundered on the road, that he did not venture to carry with him his master's commission. Having caused it to be copied, he took only the duplicate, leaving the original in his own house. [c]

Banditti, and outlaws.

The frontiers were invested by troops of outlaws and Banditti, whom persecution had driven to seek subsistence among the mountains or defiles of Savoy and Germany. It was unsafe even for embassadors, or men of the highest quality, to venture beyond the limits of France, unless protected by an armed force.

Their numbers.

In 1575, Pibrac being on his embassy to Poland, from Henry the Third, was beset by a band of robbers, near Montbelliard, on the borders of Germany. His equipage was plundered, two of his attendants were murdered, and he narrowly escaped with his life [d]. Henry, Prince of Condé, some years afterwards, returning from Geneva into Dauphiné, was in like manner stopped and pillaged by ruffians, who, ignorant of his rank, did not detain his person [e]. It is notwithstanding certain, that the northern and eastern provinces of the kingdom enjoyed at intervals, a comparative

[b] Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 26.
[c] Memoires D'Aub. p. 98.
[d] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 276.
[e] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 228.

serenity;

serenity; and that travelling was not only secure, but commodious, in those districts. We may see with what safety, and even convenience, Montaigne travelled in 1580, through Champagne, from La Fere in Picardy, to Plombieres in Lorrain; as well as in the following year, from Lyons, across all the interior provinces, to his castle or seat on the river Dordogne, in Perigord. He seems to have neither suffered hardship, nor apprehended danger; though it is evident that his attendants were few, and only such as every man of condition would carry with him on a journey[f]. It would probably have been difficult, even before the late Revolution in 1789; and it would assuredly be still more difficult at present, to discover at Chalons on the Marne, so good an inn as Montaigne found in that town, above two centuries earlier, in 1580. "We lodged," says he, "at "the Crown, which is a handsome house, and "they serve in silver plate: the greater part "of the beds and coverlids are of silk[g]." This description, together with some others, may tend to make us doubt, whether in the parts of France where civil war had not banished the arts and comforts of life; accommodations, and places of reception for travellers, were greatly inferior to those found in the present age. Montaigne appears to have performed the journey on his own horses, and to have been accompanied or followed by mules for his servants and baggage.[h]

Facility of travelling in some provinces.

Inns, and accommodations.

[f] Montaigne, Voyages, vol. i. p. 1—23; and vol. iii. p. 452—460.
[g] Ibid. vol. i. p. 12.
[h] Ibid. p. 3.

Among

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Distempers. The plague.

Among the disorders frequent during the period under our review, whose ravages proved peculiarly destructive, must be reckoned the plague. That scourge of the human race seemed to have succeeded to the leprosy, which the Cruzaders had brought to Europe from the coasts of Syria, as early as the twelfth century. It is clear, that France was scarcely ever altogether free from pestilential diseases; sometimes lurking in the provinces, among the poor inhabitants of obscure towns; at other times laying waste the capital, and extending their fatal effects over the whole kingdom. England, though from its insular position, less liable to similar visitations, yet suffered frequently by them. No wise and vigilant precautions, such as are adopted by modern states, were taken to prevent its entrance, or to arrest its progress in either country. The insalubrity of cities, the want of air, cleanliness, and police, contributed to nourish or perpetuate it, among the inferior orders of people. To that class were usually confined its principal attacks, though it sometimes entered the houses of the great, and invaded the palaces of kings. In 1562, thirty thousand persons were carried off by the plague, in the city of Orleans alone [i]: nor shall we wonder at so vast a mortality, when we consider that the infected were heaped together in rooms, where they communicated the malady to each other. D'Aubigné says that at Or-

Want of police, and precautions.

Numbers carried off by it.

[i] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 11.

leans,

leans, the surgeon, and four other persons of the family, died in the chamber where he himself lay at the point of death, of the same contagious disease[k]. The plague of 1580, was the most memorable and destructive which took place under Henry the Third. We may see in De Thou, all the symptoms by which it was preceded and accompanied. In the beginning of June, a distemper manifested itself at Paris, which he denominates "La Coqueluche," or the hooping cough; but which, if we may judge from his description, was far more serious than the disorder so termed in the present age. "It shewed itself," says he, "by an "aching at the extremity of the back-bone; "by a shivering, followed with heaviness in "the head; and by weakness in all the limbs, "joined with a violent pain in the breast. If "such as were affected with it, were not cured "by the fourth or fifth day, the malady dege-"nerated into fever, which almost always car-"ried off the patient. Those who neglected "the disorder, did well: on the contrary, such "as were either bled or purged, generally "died[l]." Henry the Third himself, the Duke of Guise, and many of the first nobility, were attacked with this distemper, which was immediately followed by the plague.[m]

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Hooping cough.

Description of it.

"There never," says De Thou, "was seen "a finer autumn, nor a greater abundance of

Plague of 1580, at Paris. Its ravages.

[k] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 11.
[l] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 401 and 402.
[m] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 117.

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" every sort of fruit; insomuch that the contagion was believed to proceed, rather from " the influence of the stars, than from a corruption of the air [n]." —" The plague carried " off in about six months, forty thousand persons, of whom the greater number consisted " of the lowest of the people. It rendered " Paris almost desert; and the houses of the " rich, whom fear had induced to fly from the " capital, were in great danger of being pillaged by robbers, who during the nights " armed themselves, infested the streets, and " committed disorders with impunity. All the " vigilance of the Provost of the merchants, " aided by the magistrates, was scarcely effectual to repress their outrages [o]." The King, after first retiring to the village of St. Maur, only a league from the metropolis, withdrew precipitately to Blois, in order to secure himself from infection. In this crisis, the intrepid and magnanimous conduct of Christopher De Thou, first President of the parliament of Paris, father to the celebrated historian just cited, eminently conduced to preserve that city from complete anarchy, as well as desolation. Though, as he had arrived at a very advanced period of life, he was accustomed annually to repair to his country-house during the autumnal season; he refused to consult either his own safety, ease, or gratification, at the expence of his public duty. He even appeared every day

Magnanimity of the President De Thou.

[n] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 401 and 402.
[o] Ibid. p. 400. Œuvres de Paré, p. 568.

in

in his coach, in the streets, from a desire of convincing the people how much he despised the danger, and in order to animate them by his example. We must own, that such a character would have graced the Consular ages of Rome. The pattern exhibited by De Thou in 1580, was imitated, and even exceeded in 1720, at Marseilles, by the Bishop of that city, during the plague.

Exertions made to check its progress.

Precautions and exertions for diminishing the violence of the contagion, seem to have been made in 1580, by the magistrates of Paris. An officer, entitled from his functions the Provost of health, was created, who caused the sick to be transported to hospitals, wherever they appeared to suffer under the inability of procuring proper assistance in their own houses. Tents being pitched without the walls, for their reception, a contribution towards supporting these extraordinary expences, was raised upon the inhabitants[p]. Malvedy, mathematical instructor to the King, who possessed an equal knowledge of medicine, undertook to attend the diseased; but it does not seem to have been accompanied with any eminent success. The pestilence raged during six months, diminishing with the approach of winter. It is not unworthy of remark, that so awful a visitation of Providence, far from amending, rather augmented the depravity of manners among the people. Such became the solitude and depopulation of

Dissolution of manners, produced by it.

[p] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 118.

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the capital, that the tradesmen not only played at bowls upon the bridge of "Notre Dame," and in the great hall of the "Palais," where the courts of law were accustomed to be held; but, games of chance, and tables for play, were established in the open streets [q]. A circumstance precisely similar is related by Boccace, relative to the effect of the destructive pestilence which ravaged Italy in 1348, upon the manners of the Florentines [r]. Almost all the towns and villages in the vicinity of Paris, caught the infection. At the city of Laön in Picardy, it was so violent, as to carry off six thousand persons. [s]

Re-appearance of the plague.

Notwithstanding these destructive ravages, so little had the malignity of the distemper ceased, or so inattentive were the magistrates to effect its total extinction, that we find it re-appearing in the capital and in the provinces, during the greater part of the years 1583, and 1584. One of the ladies of the Queen's household having been seized with it, and carried off suddenly at Blois, the court fled to St. Germain [t]. We may see in the Memoirs of Sully, what havoc was made by the plague in that age, and what terror it inspired [u]. In 1587, having obtained permission to visit his wife, who had remained at Rosny, he learnt on his arrival, that the greater part of the inhabitants of the town were already dead of the plague; and

Account given of it by Sully.

[q] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 119. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 67.
[r] Decameron, vol. i. p. iv. Preface.
[s] De Thou, vol. viii. p. 400. Letters de Foix, p. 46.
[t] Busbeq. Letters 20. 22. 27. and 43.
[u] Sully, vol. i. p. 34.

that

that in the castle where she resided, two of her women, together with three of her domestics, had been carried off by the same malady. Such was the violence of the contagion, that finding herself reduced to quit the castle, she remained two days and two nights in the adjoining forest, seated in her coach, as no person would open their house for her reception. "I found her "lodged," says he, "in a castle named Huets, "lent her by my aunt, Madame de Campag- "nac, with no other attendants, than one "young lady, a maid-servant, a coachman, and "a lacquey. When I arrived, she repeatedly "refused to open the gates; imploring me from "a window, with her hands clasped, and tears "in her eyes, not to approach her for at least "a month." Sully's affection and impatience having nevertheless surmounted his terrors, induced him to enter the castle.[x]

It is difficult for imagination to conceive a picture more terrible or affecting, than that drawn by Paré, of the plague, in his medical works. Thucydides, in his description of the pestilential disease, which ravaged Athens during the Peloponnesian war, does not excite more emotion. Paré, who had been conversant with the plague, and present at its ravages, throughout the course of a long life; describes its operation on the human mind, on society, and on the affections of the heart, in the most glowing, as well as awful colors. All the charities, ties, and connexions of man,

Description of it by Paré.

[x] Sully, vol. i. p. 53 and 54.

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seemed to disappear or extinguish before it. Far from extending aid to persons attacked by its malignant symptoms, they were instantly abandoned, or driven out to perish, by their own nearest relatives. The terror of receiving the infection, surmounting every other emotion, steeled to pity the most benevolent or generous dispositions. Populous cities became suddenly desart; and every habitation was shut, or quitted by its owners. Bands of desperate malefactors or robbers, availing themselves of the general consternation, entered the houses of the dying, plundered their effects, and even accelerated their end, by strangling them in their beds[y]. Boccacio, in his "Decameron," depictures in similar colours, the moral effects of the plague by which Florence was desolated towards the middle of the fourteenth century. It would seem incredible, if we did not know the fact from the same incontestable authority, that these wretches even endeavoured to spread the pestilential and malignant influences of the distemper; by besmearing the doors and window-shutters of those houses where the infection had not hitherto penetrated, with the virulent and infectious matter taken from the bodies of persons already dead of the plague. The presence of Charles the Ninth himself, accompanied by his mother Catherine and the court, did not restrain or prevent these flagitious enormities being practised in 1565, at Lyons[z]. No spiritual

[y] Œuvres de Paré, p. 567, 568.

[z] Ibid. p. 536, and p. 570.

assist-

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assistance could be procured for the sick; but, in the houses of the opulent, a surgeon being usually shut up with the family, was compelled to administer help, while any persons remained alive[a]. The calamity attained to its utmost point of horror and destruction, by the incapacity of burying the dead, whose bodies remaining in a state of putrefaction, spread the infection to the survivors. "Even the physicians "themselves were pursued," says Paré, "when "they appeared in the streets, by the inhabit- "ants, who attempted to murder them with "stones, like mad dogs; exclaiming, that they "ought only to come out by night, lest they "should communicate the disease to such as "had hitherto escaped its malignity.[b]"

State of those infected.

The practice, common during a great part of the sixteenth century, of leaving uninterred the corpses of those persons who fell in battles, contributed in no small degree to spread, and to produce the most pestilential maladies. We cannot read without amazement and disgust, the recital made us by Paré, of the spectacle which the field of St. Quintin exhibited, some few days after that celebrated engagement in the summer of 1557. "Several "gentlemen," says he, "who were sent to "endeavour to find the body of Monsieur de "Bois-Dauphin, who had been killed in the "late action, requested me to accompany them. "Their search proved unsuccessful, the putre-

Custom of leaving the dead, unburied.

[a] Œuvres de Paré, p. 570.

[b] Ibid. p. 568.

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"faction which had universally taken place, "having so disfigured the corpses, as to render "them no longer recognizable. We saw the "earth covered with human bodies, for more "than half a league round us; and our stay "was short, on account of the cadaverous "stench, issuing from such a multitude of men "and horses. Our arrival disturbed the flies, "which were settled on them: they were of a "monstrous size, with green and blue backs. "When they rose into the air, such were their "numbers, as to darken the sun; and they "buzzed in a marvellous manner. I believe, "that they were sufficient to produce the "plague, in the place where they settled." [c]

Venereal distemper.

If the ravages of the plague were in a great degree limited to the inferior orders of society, there existed another distemper frequent in that age, whose attacks proved hardly less fatal, and which seemed to be directed against sovereigns, in common with the meanest of their subjects. It is remarkable that Paré, who has written on the nature, symptoms, and cure of this scourge of the human race; whose authority must be regarded as superior to any other medical writer of the period, does not seem to consider it as having been imported from America. On the contrary, he says that it was denominated by the Romans, "Puden-"dagra;" and in another place he asserts, that it resembled in many of its symptoms, the

[c] Œuvres de Paré, p. 795.

disease called "Mentagra," with which the Roman empire was afflicted under Tiberius's reign[d]. The recital given by Paré, of the effects produced from its attacks on the body, cannot be perused without horror. Yet he admits in the most pointed terms, that at the time when he wrote, under Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, it had become very considerably diminished in violence. "The disorder "of the present time, is much less cruel, and "easier of cure, than it was at its first com- "mencement, in time past; for it evidently "becomes mitigated from day to day. Astro- "logers attribute this fact to the influences of "the sky."—"Physicians rather chuse to "refer it to the invention of a number of ex- "cellent remedies, which men of talents have "diligently sought, in order to oppose so cruel "an evil."[e]

Remedies.

Four different modes of treating the distemper, were known and practised, when Paré composed his works between 1570 and 1585. "The first," says he, "is the decoction of gum- "guaiacum; the second, by unctions; the "third, by mercury; the fourth, by perfumes[f]." But he repeatedly and decidedly maintains, that the only specific and sovereign remedy, is mercury. He denominates it the true antidote, comparing it to a ferret, which chases and expels the malady, however concealed or inveterate in the habit.[g]

[d] Œuvres de Paré, p. 444, and p. 446. [e] Ibid. p. 446.
[f] Ibid. p. 447. [g] Ibid. p. 444, and p. 449, and p. 555.

The

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Francis the First.

The disease which Columbus or his followers are accused of having brought from the New World, was not felt among any of the royal houses of Europe, in so severe a manner as in France. One of the most accomplished, as well as superior Princes of the sixteenth century, Francis the First, expired in the vigor of his age and talents, from its incurable effects. It

Henry the Third.

was in vain that Henry the Third addressed his prayers to the Virgin, or obtained Jubilees from sovereign pontiffs. He had met with an accident, amidst the splendor of his reception at Venice in 1574, which probably incapacitated him for perpetuating the family of Valois[h].

Duke of Alenson.

His brother, the Duke of Alenson, youngest of the four sons of Henry the Second, and last descendant of so many monarchs, was even, if possible, more unfortunate. His face, disfigured and hideous, exposed him to universal pity or derision; his premature death having been probably caused by the same complaint, which abridged the life and reign of his grandfather[i]. After the lapse of near a century since the introduction of that disease, we may judge how malignant it was still esteemed, and how little progress had been made in its extirpation or cure, by perusing the regulations established as late as 1581, at the public baths of Plombieres in Lorrain. All women of pleasure or disorderly conduct, were prohibited by

[h] Davila, p. 598.
[i] Busbeq. Letter 19. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 701.

order

order of the Dukes of Lorrain, not only from presuming to enter the baths; but from approaching within five hundred paces of them, on pain of being whipped at the four corners of the town. [k]

Intermitting fevers and agues appear to have been general or continual in camps, among armies and soldiers. It would be endless to cite examples of the fact; nor can we wonder at the frequency or obstinacy of those diseases, when we recollect that the only specific for those disorders, the bark of Peru, was not imported into Europe before the reign of Louis the Thirteenth [l]. It may excite a smile in the present age, to know that the French monarchs laid claim to the same supernatural power of curing the Scrophula, or king's evil, so long arrogated and exercised by the English Princes, down to the last Princess of the Stuart line inclusive. The cure was performed in both countries, by touching with the right hand. Paré informs us that in 1564, when Charles the Ninth, then scarcely fourteen years old, visited Bayonne, Spaniards of condition repaired thither to receive the benefit of his touch. He tacitly confesses or implies at the same time, its inefficacy, when he adds that he afterwards treated them according to the principles of art, and effected several cures [m]. Henry the Third seems

Intermitting fevers.

King's evil.

[k] Voyages de Montaigne, vol. i. p. 32.

[l] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Etran. p. 182. Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 106.

[m] Œuvres de Paré, p. 800.

very

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very judiciously to have declined exerting its virtue on Epernon his favorite, who in 1584 was attacked with the disease so immediately subjected to his royal master's power and controul. The pretension seems, indeed, to have excited among men of liberality and education, not less ridicule in the sixteenth, than it does in the nineteenth century. [n]

General review of the period.

Before we finally dismiss the period under our consideration, it may be proper to take a general review of the great characteristic vices and virtues by which it was marked; qualities which strongly discriminate it, as a portion of time, either from the age of Francis the First which preceded it, or from that of Henry the Fourth and Louis the Thirteenth, by which it was followed. Unhappily, the list of vices includes many of the most deformed, or disgusting features of human nature; whereas the virtues may be comprised in a narrow compass. In both, we trace the genius of the nation as it then existed; violent, intemperate, and carrying even its laudable qualities to a censurable excess.

Characteristic vices.

Imprecations.

At the head of the vices, may be placed the practice of mingling oaths and imprecations in ordinary discourse. It is well known that Francis the First, however dissolute he might be in his pleasures, yet carefully abstained from every species of profane language. His common and peculiar attestation was, "Foi d'honnete homme," "on the word of a gentleman," which he piqued himself on preserving unsullied.

[n] Busbeq. Letter, 43.

sullied[o]. Nor does Henry the Second appear to have deviated in this respect, from his father's example. So different were the habits of Charles the Ninth, that all his ordinary conversation was mingled with blasphemous and indecent oaths. Catherine of Medicis was, herself, the cause of it, by placing him under the tuition of Marshal Retz, a Florentine, who infused into his pupil the most odious principles, and encouraged him in the most vicious habits. "He taught the young monarch," says De Thou, "to swear, never to speak the truth, "and always to disguise his thoughts[p]." Can we wonder at the pernicious effects of such a depraved system of education? The custom of profane swearing, which was become universal, excited so little animadversion, that even children and peasants, as well as gentlemen and soldiers, permitted themselves an unbounded freedom of imprecation.[q]

Education of Charles the Ninth.

Universality of imprecations.

It will scarcely be credited that "legends of oaths," containing every mode and variation of blasphemy, were published, as if with a view to circulate and facilitate their use[r]. We find that the practice excited by its enormity, the attention of government. Henry the Third himself was exempt from the reproach, if we may believe Chiverny, who must have possessed means of knowing the fact[s]: yet Sir Edward

[o] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 229.
[p] De Thou, vol. vii. p. 740.
[q] La Noue premier Discours, p. 6 and 7. Hist. des derniers Troubles de Fra. liv. ii. p. 38.
[r] Esprit de la Ligue, note, vol. ii. p. 103.
[s] Chiverny, vol. i. p. 148.

Stafford,

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Ineffectual attempts of government, to repress the practice,

Stafford, in his famous dispatch to Queen Elizabeth, of the 25th of February, 1588, expressly repeats the great oaths which the King swore during his discourse [t]. In his harangue to the States at Blois, pronounced in the month of December of the same year, he strongly insisted on the necessity of prohibiting blasphemies, under severe penalties; and on the propriety of punishing without distinction, all such persons as should be guilty of the practice [u]. He was followed by Montholon, the keeper of the seals, in his discourse to the assembly; who warned the nobility from provoking and drawing down the divine vengeance, by their execrable custom of swearing on all occasions [x]. No effectual exertion appears however to have been made for the reform of so general and disgraceful a vice, which continued to characterize the nation. The King of Navarre, in his declaration from Saumur, dated in April, 1589, warmly exhorts the Catholic clergy to interpose their efforts for checking and suppressing it: but the admonitions of a Hugonot and an excommunicated Prince, were not, it must be owned, likely to awaken the zeal, or to stimulate the fervor of the Romish ecclesiastics [y]. We may see in Brantome, what strange and eccentric imprecations were common among military men, who generally affected one peculiar to themselves; making use of it as their

and of the King of Navarre.

[t] Hardwick State Papers, vol. i. p. 251—264.
[u] De Thou, vol. x. p. 378.
[x] Ibid. p. 386.
[y] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 177.

special

special form of attesting, or assuring any fact[z]. We find in like manner, that the Norman kings who reigned in this country, and some of the early Angevin princes, swore "by the splendor of God, by the foot of God," and similar oaths.

Libertinism.

Never perhaps, was libertinism and debauch carried to a greater height in modern ages, than under Henry the Third. This vice, which had gradually augmented since the accession of Francis the First, attained to an enormous pitch during the reign of his last descendant. Catherine of Medicis, destitute of sentiments of virtue, as well as of modesty, and consulting only interest or ambition in all her steps; did not hesitate throughout her whole life, to sacrifice the chastity and honor of her female attendants, to the completion of her political objects. Every negotiation was facilitated, and every treaty was cemented by some victim, selected from among the numerous and brilliant circle of ladies, who attended her wherever she moved. It was denominated the "Escadron volant[a]."—"The impudicity of "the young women of the court in gene- "ral," says a contemporary writer, "but pecu- "liarly, of the attendants of the Queen-mo- "ther, is so notorious, that among all the "courtiers, not a testimony could be found in "their favour[b]." Mademoiselle de Rouet, a

Dissolute conduct of Catherine of Medicis.

[z] Brant. vol. i. Cap. Fran. p. 104.

[a] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 165 and 166, and p. 298. Trad. de l'Hopital, vol. ii. Recherches, p. 55.

[b] Toscin des Massacres, p. 49, cited in the Confession de Sancy, p. 461.

maid

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maid of honor, who was sacrificed to Anthony, King of Navarre; and who attended him, though a married man, even to his last moments, as the Duchess of Portsmouth did Charles the Second;—Mademoiselle de Limeuil, another young lady of the same class, distinguished for her beauty; who by the express command of Catherine, having permitted the criminal assiduities of Louis, Prince of Condé, was brought to bed in the Queen-dowager's apartments; — together with a long train of others, commemorated by Brantome and d'Aubigné, leave no room to doubt of the dissolute depravity of the court. An example so pernicious, did not fail to produce the worst effects on the morals of the capital, and of the nation. If we wish to read the description of the Court of France as it existed in 1572, under Charles the Ninth, we may see it exhibited in the strongest language and colors, by the pen of the Queen of Navarre herself, Jane d'Albret, in a letter addressed to her son, the Prince of Bearn, who became soon afterwards King on her demise, and finally ascended the French throne, as Henry the Fourth. It is dated from Blois, where the court then resided, and merits to be universally known. The duplicity, and treachery of the young King and his mother Catherine, are there exposed without disguise. We trace in every line, the apprehensions of a parent for her son, whose morals, she justly dreaded, might become corrupted by the contact with so dissolute a society; from which, not only religion,

Letter of Jane d'Albret to her son.

ligion, but decorum itself was banished. "It "is not," says she, "the men who solicit the "women here: the women corrupt and solicit "the men." [c]

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Margaret of Valois, Queen of Henry the Fourth, realized in her conduct, every thing related by Suetonius, or by Juvenal, of the Messalinas and Faustinas of antiquity. The wives of Claudius, or of Marcus Aurelius, proverbially infamous, could not exceed her in profligacy. Abandoned from her earliest years to the most shameless libertinism, she rendered the court of Navarre, as she had before done that of France, a theatre of intrigue; not even hesitating to aid her husband's amours, by every possible subserviency [d]. Scarcely had she attained her twenty-first year, when she successfully undertook, in concert with Henry, Duke of Guise, and his uncle the Cardinal of Lorrain, to shake the nuptial fidelity of Mary of Cleves, Princess of Condé, who was conducted to the Duke of Anjou's bed, by Margaret herself [e]. Even to its latest period, her life continued to form a perpetual scene of sensuality and violation of decency; in which she was imitated by the ladies of that voluptuous court, who blended licentiousness even with the most pious exercises or acts of devotion. "The "Duchesses of Guise and of Nevers," says D'Aubigné, "had the portraits of their two

Margaret of Valois.

Her profligacy, and debauchery.

[c] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. i. p. 869—601.
[d] Vie de Marg. p. 314. Vie d'Epernon, vol. i. p. 56.
[e] Vie de Marg. p. 126.

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"lovers, Roquemont, and the Baron de Fumel, "painted as on the cross, in their prayer-"books, and closets. They, in a similar man-"ner, had the likenesses of their mistresses "drawn under the character, and in the dress of "the Virgin." Such a profanation of the most sacred mysteries of religion, excites not more amazement, than it impresses with horror!

Depraved and loose education.

How loose was the education bestowed on young women of condition, and how licentious were the manners of the age, we may see in the writings of L'Hopital. "The first lesson of a "mother to her daughter," says that severe and virtuous magistrate, "is to instruct her "how to distribute with grace, the edifice of "her hair; to spoil by art, the lustre of her "natural attractions; to adorn her head with "diamonds, and her bosom with a necklace of "gold. She next carries her to the suppers of "our prelates, so prolonged, and so licentious. "The unfortunate girl is lost at her return[f]." It is impossible to peruse this description, without recalling to our minds, the picture drawn by Horace of the young women of quality in Rome —

"Motus doceri gaudet Ionios
Matura virgo, et fingitur artibus;
Jam tunc et incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui."

Its effects.

Brantome declares in the clearest and least ambiguous language, that there was hardly a young woman, married or single, who on her first arrival at court, did not fall into the hands

[f] Confess. de Sancy, p. 234. Trad. de l'Hop. vol. i. Epitres, p. 128.

of

of the Cardinal of Lorrain, and was not seduced by his presents. "Few or none," says he, "quitted the court with their honor[g]." What opinion must we entertain of the courtiers, when ecclesiastics occupying the highest dignities of the Romish church, could display such profligate examples!

Encouragement given to vice by Henry the Third.

Henry the Third, not content with exhibiting in his own conduct, a model of the most depraved, as well as effeminate debauch; endeavoured by precept and exhortation to encourage vice, while he rendered ridiculous all pretension to female chastity. Either destitute of inclination or of ability to practise his own profligate maxims, he delighted in defaming and exposing the weaknesses with which he became acquainted. "Never," says a contemporary writer, "did the court of our kings, in which "formerly the French nobility learnt the exer- "cise of virtue, overflow so much with every "kind of disorder, luxury, and excess, as "under the reign of Henry the Third; pecu- "liarly in the years 1586 and 1587. It may "be said that every thing was then permitted, "except to be virtuous[h]." The energy of the concluding expression, is not to be exceeded by the delineation of the Roman depravity among the Senatorial and Patrician classes, transmitted to us by Tacitus, as it existed under the sceptre of Tiberius. Brantome did not hesitate to dedicate his work, denominated, "The Lives

Works of Brantome.

[g] Brant. vol. ii. Dames Gal. p. 418.

[h] Hist. des derniers Troub. de Fra. liv. ii. p. 39. — "a Lyons 1597."

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" of the Women of Gallantry of his own " Time," to the Duke of Alenson; a production, which in licentiousness of sentiment, language, and description, may rank with the worst, of the worst age[i]. It seems difficult to form an idea of a more abandoned court, than that which he there depictures, and in which he had passed his whole life. " I knew," says he, " a Venetian painter, by name Bernardo, who " kept a shop at Paris: he has sworn to me, that " within the space of a year, he had sold more " than fifty sets of Aretino, to ladies, married " and unmarried[k]." When we reflect who was the Aretino here mentioned by Brantome, and the work to which he alludes, we may conceive some idea of the profligacy of manners under the last prince of the house of Valois.

Depravity of the court.

The city of Arezzo in Tuscany, gave birth to two Aretinos. The former, named Leonardo, distinguished by his historical and literary talents, flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; dying at Florence in 1444, amidst the applauses and admiration of his countrymen. The second Aretino, Peter, who lived more than a hundred years later, attained to a very different species of celebrity. Like his contemporary Paul Jovius, he found means of laying under contribution, the greatest sovereigns of that period: however incredible it may seem, the fact is incontestable, that Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, contended for the panegyrics of Peter Aretino. They even ap-

Peter Aretino.

[i] Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. Dedication.
[k] Brant. vol. i. p. 60.

peased,

peased, or mollified him, by presents and distinctions, which did not always prove effectual in restraining the virulence of his censures or invectives. Not content, however, with such testimonies to the superiority of his genius, he converted his abilities to the most abandoned purposes, by composing "Sonnets" for the sixteen postures or attitudes of the human body, engraved by Mark Antonio of Bologna, in 1525, after the original designs of Julio Romano, the pupil of Raphael. No language can sufficiently reprobate, or consign to adequate execration, these infamous productions of turpitude and debauch, calculated to corrupt the senses and the heart. At the end of near three centuries, the postures of Aretino are become proverbial, and perpetuate the infamy of his name; which receives an augmentation when we know that with the same pen which composed the "Sonnets," he wrote "the Life of the Virgin Mary, and of St. Catherine of Sienna." Brantome, after commemorating the fact relative to Bernardo, the Venetian painter, asserts in another place, that women of beauty were commonly sent by their husbands, to solicit the judges in all causes of moment; adding that it was notorious, how much the decrees pronounced, or sentences issued in the courts of criminal and civil law, were affected by the compliances of female suitors[l]. La Noue and Le Laboureur confirm in the fullest manner, all the assertions of Brantome.[m]

Nature of his compositions.

[l] Brant. vol. i. Dames Gal. p. 224 and 225.

[m] La Noue, p. 14—16. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 102.

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Entertainments and banquets of Henry the Third.

In the more select or private pleasures of that age and court, decency itself was withdrawn from the society. We find the King giving an entertainment to his brother, the Duke of Alenson, in 1577, at the castle of Plessiz les Tours. The company was numerous, and all the guests of both sexes were habited in green; probably as intimating that they had banished or suspended the controul of reason. It is hardly credible that the ladies who assisted at it, were dressed in men's clothes, halfnaked, having their hair loose and floating on their backs, as it was then commonly worn by brides. Habited in this disorderly attire, they served at table, and brought up the dishes. It appears that the Queen-mother herself, though then near sixty years of age, was not ashamed to assist, and to preside at so indecent a banquet[n], worthy only of Sardanapalus. The amours of Henry became the opprobium of mankind, and were supposed to be of a nature, which, however they may plead the sanction of Greek or of Roman antiquity, of Anacreon, or of Horace, the purity and dignity of history cannot mention without contamination. His Minions subjected him to the contumely and abhorrence of his own subjects. They were young men, whose dress and manners partook more of a feminine, than of a manly beauty. An author of that period, describing them as they commonly appeared in 1576, says, "that they wore their hair long, frizzed to a "great degree, and turning up over their little

Minions of that monarch.

[n] L'Etoile, p. 21.

"velvet bonnets, precisely like women[o]." Allusions to the apprehended nature of his attachment towards them, were made in all the satirical verses or Epigrams of the time. Satires.

We find in D'Aubigné, who, though a Hugonot, is a writer of veracity, and who had access to the highest information; that the King contracted a marriage with Quelus, and afterwards with another of his minions. The contract of this abominable union was even signed by Henry, in his own blood; and the Marquis D'O, Superintendant of the finances, witnessed it in the same manner, having opened one of his veins for the purpose. After the death of Maugiron, the King lavished marks of fondness and affection on his corpse, which are not to be reflected on without astonishment, nor related without debasing the dignity of the human species, and staining the English language. We repeat, that it is only in the effeminate and monstrous vices of the Syrian Heliogabalus, or in those imputed to Tiberius while at Caprœa, we can find any parallel to the conduct of Henry the Third. The turpitudes and debaucheries of Caligula, Nero, and Commodus, whatever horror they excite, had in them at least the stamp of manhood. James the First has incurred imputations, somewhat allied to the accusations preferred against the French Prince. But there seems to have been more of culpable weakness, than of criminality, in the male predilections of the Scottish King. Henry

Vices,

and turpitudes,

[o] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 70.

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589. of Henry.

scarcely affected to draw any veil before his enormities. The younger part of the members who were deputed to the States-general, convoked at Blois in 1588, complained publickly in their letters to the provinces by whom they were delegated, that attempts were not only made to corrupt their principles, and to gain their suffrages, but to subject them to the pleasures of their sovereign. [p]

Profanations.

By a refinement in vice and impiety, which we contemplate with amazement, he made even the exercises of devotion subservient to his detestable gratifications. The most skilful artists were employed in adorning his Missals and prayer-books, with the portraits of his Minions, habited in the monastic dress of St. Francis, or of St. Jerome. We can scarcely believe, if it was not asserted by contemporary writers of the best authority, that several of the most favoured, were represented on the cross, with the attributes of our Saviour; while others were depictured and dressed in the character of the Virgin Mary [q]. As if to render this monument of impious sensuality still more singular, it was consecrated to vengeance, as well as to pleasure. At the end of the prayers, were similar portraits of various individuals who had rejected and disdained his solicitations. Among them stood peculiarly distinguished the head of Francis de Chatillon, son to the great Admiral Coligni, with his sleeves turned up, in order to display his arms. Round it, was

[p] Confess. de Sancy, p. 201, 202, and p. 219.

[q] D'Aubigné, Histoire Gen. vol. iii. p. 362. Confess. de Sancy p. 213, 214, and p. 223—225, and p. 234 and p. 236.

placed

placed this inscription: "Non per amor, mà "per vendetta[r]." It is difficult to conceive, or to convey an idea of greater depravity; nor can we wonder at the indignation and contempt which such a conduct excited, not only in the court, but throughout the country. CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

Tavannes does not hesitate to say, that the institution of the order of the *Holy Ghost* in 1579, was only designed to commemorate the amours of the King with his two Minions, Quelus and Maugiron, who had been recently killed in a duel: adding, that he celebrated by that act their funeral games, in imitation of the classical precedents of Alexander, and of Hadrian, who had thus immortalized their favorites, Ephestion and Antinous[s]. It is true that Tavannes mentions this extraordinary fact, as being, possibly, only a calumny: but he allows that Henry the Fourth altered the cyphers and devices worn by the knights, which implies the truth of the report[t]. The order of the *Garter*, near two centuries and a half anterior in point of time, to that of the *Holy Ghost;* whether it derived its title, as we commonly suppose, from an article of female dress which Edward picked up, or from any other cause, reposes on gallantry and chivalry as its legitimate foundations. Order of the Holy Ghost.

Public honor and principle did not survive the extinction of private virtue and morality. Corruption finding its way into the highest departments, every thing became venal. Un- Corruption, and venality.

[r] Confess. de Sancy, p. 204.
[s] Tavannes, p. 179.
[t] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 41.

der

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

der Henry the Second, the Constable Montmorency did not blush to accept from the Count de Chateaubriant, the estate and castle of that name in Bretagne, as a recompence for the order of *St. Michael*, obtained through his interest[u]. But, though he unquestionably forgot his own dignity in so mercenary a transaction, he would have been incapable of betraying his master to his foreign enemies. After the accession of Charles the Ninth, ministers occupying the first employments of state, were found base enough to sell their sovereign and their country to Spain. In 1565, when Philip the Second meditated his detestable project of seizing and delivering over Jane d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, together with her two children, to the Inquisition; intelligence of the design was privately communicated to the French court, by Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, sister to Charles. The Spanish officer, specially charged with dispatches, containing not only the particulars of that most atrocious design, but, of the machinations of Philip against the repose of the French monarchy, might have been easily apprehended on his road to Paris, or on his return back to Madrid: but the King of Spain had already found means to corrupt, and to purchase some of the most confidential servants of his brother-in-law, who averted the blow, and permitted the courier, unmolested, to perform his journey. L'Aubespine, first secretary of state, had become Philip's pensioner; and so

Examples of those vices.

Ministers, sold to Spain.

L'Aubespine.

[u] Brant. vol. ii. Cap. Fran. p. 124.

notorious

notorious was his corruption, that the Constable Montmorency no sooner knew of L'Ausbespine's having been acquainted with the transaction by Catherine of Medicis, than instantly predicting the consequence, he foretold that the courier would be allowed to quit Paris without injury or impediment.[x]

During the reign of Henry the Third, it was not doubted that Castilian gold pervaded even the inmost recesses of the cabinet. In 1587, the Duke of Epernon reproached Villeroy, then secretary of state, in presence of the King himself, with betraying to "the League" and to Philip the Second, every secret of importance. So rude an insult was supposed to have been committed with the royal participation and concurrence. Epernon accused him of receiving a pension of double Pistoles from the Spanish court[y]. It is however certain that Villeroy, in his "Memoirs," while he avows the corruption of the age and of the ministry, justifies himself in a satisfactory manner, from having taken foreign money, or accepted any pecuniary bribe[z]. The treasonable correspondence and connexion carried on between the Guises, as heads of "the League," and the King of Spain, was so undisguised, that scarcely even a veil was drawn over the transaction. We may judge of what nature, and how momentous, were the services stipulated to be rendered on the part of the princes of

Villeroy.

The Guises. Their connection with Philip the Second.

[x] Villeroy, Memoires, vol. ii. p. 56 and 57.
[y] Memoires pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 228.
[z] Villeroy, Mem. vol. i. p. 122—126.

Lorrain,

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Lorrain, by the magnitude of the sums which they received from Philip. After the assassination of the Duke at Blois, in 1588, it was ascertained that he carried on a regular intercourse both with Spain and Savoy. The aggregate amount of the money transmitted him by the former power, during ten years subsequent to the death of Don John of Austria, did not fall much short of two hundred thousand pounds[a]. It must be owned that Philip paid dear for the alliance and friendship of the Guises; but in return, they convulsed the state, and had nearly overturned the French monarchy. The remittances which they received from Madrid, enabled them to shake the fidelity of many of the royal governors. Villars, to whom the important maritime post of Havre-de-Grace had been entrusted, sold the place, together with himself, in 1588, to "the League," for fifteen thousand crowns[b]. His conduct, however base, was by no means singular.

Vast sums expended by that Prince.

Corruption in foreign courts.

It is curious to observe, that the same arts of venality or corruption which so strongly operated in the French court, even among the ministers of state; were practised by Charles the Ninth and his successor, with similar industry, if not with similar success, in other kingdoms. We cannot doubt, from a perusal of the original letters still existing of those two monarchs, addressed to the embassador of France in England, that they dispensed continual largesses and pensions, to persons occupying the highest

England.

[a] De Thou, vol. x. p. 480. Villeroy, Mem. vol. iii. p. 123.
[b] Davila, p. 676.

public

public situations about Elizabeth. The great object of both princes, was to effect the marriage of the Duke of Alenson, their youngest brother, with the English Queen. In order to compass it, neither promises, engagements, nor presents were spared; but, the two former were more liberally bestowed than the latter. Ladies who, it was supposed, could facilitate or accelerate the proposed match, found reason to be satisfied with the liberality and attention of the Queen-dowager. Catherine of Medicis, writing on the 29th of April, 1573, to the embassador at London, says; "I shall cause to be presented "to the Sieur de Walsingham, as he passes "through Paris, on his return home, two pieces "of fine black silk cloth for his wife, and two "others in colors, with gold and silver inter-"mixed, for her daughter; in order to gratify "him as much as possible, on account of the "hope that I have in his promises, to do all "in his power towards accomplishing the said "marriage[c]." Sir Francis Walsingham was at that time going over to England, from his embassy in France. That Dudley, Earl of Leicester, should accept of pensions or gratifications from a foreign prince, ought not to excite surprize. His rapacity, want of principle, and other vices, justify the imputation. But, that the Lord-treasurer Burleigh condescended to receive the gold of Charles the Ninth, and to bargain for the surrender of his royal mistress to the Duke of Alenson, is more difficult

Letter of Catherine of Medicis.

Lord Burleigh.

[c] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 330.

to

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589.

to believe, unless on irresistible evidence. If however, the dispatches of the King of France, and of his mother, dated "the 18th of January, "1574," do not absolutely prove this fact, it must at least be owned that they afford strong presumptions of its existence [d]. We find the Earl of Leicester, four years afterwards, in 1578, expressing his discontent to the French embassador, at the non-performance of the pecuniary promises, which had been made to him on the part of Henry the Third. That Prince, while he renews his assurances of being liberal in future, relies on the Earl's best exertions to cultivate the friendship existing between the Queen and himself. [e]

Earl of Leicester.

Irreligion, and impiety.

It cannot form matter of wonder, that in a period so corrupt and dissolute, religion was overborne by the torrent of immorality. True piety could not exist in so contagious an atmosphere. Infidelity, impiety, even atheism, became characteristics of the nation, and made a general progress among every rank of men. The long continuance of the civil wars, had tended to render the two parties equally indifferent to that very cause which originally produced the conflict [f]. Such was the open contempt manifested by the Catholic troops of the Duke of Mayenne, for the ordinances of the Romish faith, that in 1589, they not only transgressed against one of its most peremptory injunctions,

Profanations, committed by the Catholic soldiery.

[d] Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. iii. p. 373.
[e] Ibid. p. 551.
[f] La Noue, p. 5—7. Hist. des der. Troub. de Fra. p. 38.

by

by eating flesh publicly during Lent; but, they added to it mockery and profanation. By menaces of death, they compelled the priests to baptize sheep, pigs, and other animals; calling them by the names of various kinds of fish. The Duke of Mayenne was obliged to tolerate these enormities, which strongly prove the universal dissolution of manners[s]. We may close the list of vices, by mentioning one of a nature more immediately destructive than any hitherto enumerated, but which has been already described in its effects. The unlimited scope and exercise of vengeance desolated private life; armed individuals against each other; produced assassinations, duels, and murders; converting the kingdom into a vast charnel house.

Exercise of private vengeance.

The characteristic virtues of the period were few; and far from dispelling, they scarcely illuminate the darkness. Some illustrious examples of inflexible integrity, of loyalty, public virtue, and even of a magnanimous dereliction or contempt of private interest, when opposed to the general welfare, may indeed be produced. The names of Olivier, and of L'Hopital, successively Chancellors of France; of Christopher De Thou, first President of the Parliament of Paris; those of Francis of Montmorency, of Marshal d'Aumont, of Sancy, of Souvré, and of several others, might diffuse lustre over the worst age: but such are to be

Virtues of the period, few.

[s] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 282 and 283.

found

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found under Domitian, or under Commodus, and can only be considered as shining exceptions to the national character. It is with difficulty, that among a people so corrupt, we discover some amiable or elevated qualities allied to virtue, challenging our esteem or admiration. The same impartiality which stigmatizes vice and crime, demands the commemoration of whatever is laudable or generous. Even the shadow may be pourtrayed, if we cannot grasp the substance; and it is pleasing, after the survey of so depraved a time, to consider man under a less disgusting form.

Filial piety and obedience.

Parental authority, and filial respect, seem to have survived the extinction of general philanthropy or morality, and to have been held in the highest honor, even by those who did not affect a regard for any other species of reputation.

Examples of it.

Francis of Montmorency, eldest son to the Constable of that name, long after he had attained to manhood, when married to the natural daughter of Henry the Second; yet addresses his father with a humility and reverence, which recals the idea of the primitive, patriarchal ages of the world[h].

Margaret of Valois.

Margaret of Valois herself, though one of the most dissolute women who ever disgraced her sex; yet far from being deficient on this point, appears to have scrupulously fulfilled her filial duties. We may see in her own "Memoirs," with what implicit deference she receives and obeys the orders of her mother, even after she became

[h] Manusc. de Bethune, N° 8673, cited in the Trad. de l'Hop. vol. ii. Recherches, p. 105.

Queen

Queen of Navarre, and seemed to be by that circumstance, emancipated in a great measure from a state of subjection. Claudia, Duchess of Lorrain, her elder sister, expresses similar sentiments towards Catherine of Medicis, who on her part uses the most authoritative language, and is obeyed in silence, without a murmur[i]. "I have always preserved," says Margaret, in another part of her "Memoirs," "that respect "towards the Queen my mother, that whenever I have been with her, whether married "or single, I never went to any place, without "having asked her leave, and obtained her "permission[k]." We trace in all the writings of Sully, Chiverny, Tavannes, and D'Aubigné, the same humility displayed on one side, together with the same exertion of parental authority on the other part.

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Courage, which is not improperly defined to be rather a happy quality than a virtue, has been found in every period, and among every people. It has, notwithstanding, from the effects of natural, political, or moral causes, been heightened or depressed; and we do not consider the degenerate Romans under Constantine or Justinian, as equal to the legions who subjected Macedonia, Carthage, and Gaul. The spirit of chivalry raised and sublimed the valor of the Gothic nations, who overran Europe in the middle ages. Under the last princes of Valois, continued scenes of slaughter and civil war, by producing a familiarity with death, had

Courage, and contempt of death.

Causes of it.

[i] Memoires de Marguerite, a Paris, 1658, p. 19, and p. 36.
[k] Ibid. p. 54.

CHAP. VI. 1574—1589. Genius of the age.

bereaved it of the terrors which accompany the last act of life. Men became accustomed to contemplate it under every form, and to regard it as continually imminent or probable. Looking on it with a steady eye, they awaited it with a sort of sullen intrepidity, whether on the scaffold, in a dungeon, or in a field of battle. The same characteristic apathy and indifference was displayed during the reign of the *Guillotine*, when every day witnessed executions, under Robespierre. Education, habit, and enthusiasm, all conspiring to steel the mind during the period under our review, produced a disregard of peril and dissolution.

D'Aubigné.

D'Aubigné tells us, that in the year 1560, when he was scarcely nine years old, his father carried him to Paris. On their way through Amboise, they beheld the heads of the Hugonots, who had been recently executed for the conspiracy against the Guises under Francis the Second, planted upon poles; the features of many among whom, were still easy to be recognized. "At so lamentable a sight, my father," says he, "being deeply moved, his agitation "became visible on his countenance. When "we had left the town, he laid his hand upon "my head; and addressing me, said, My child, "thou must not spare thy head after mine, to "avenge those honorable chiefs whose remains "thou hast just seen; and if thou spare thy-"self, thou shalt have my malediction[1]." We may naturally conceive how strong must have been the effect on a young and sensible mind,

[1] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 4 and 6.

of such a paternal exhortation. D'Aubigné's whole life was passed in fulfilling his father's injunctions. Nor ought we to imagine that the romantic honor inspired by chivalry, was become totally extinct, even in the times which we have reviewed. Some traces or coruscations of it appear, which excite admiration. D'Aubigné says, that when on the point of commencing a skirmish, having remarked that no other of his comrades was covered with mail on their arms, except himself; disdaining an advantage which was not common to the whole troop, he immediately threw away those pieces of defensive armor.[m]

Traces of the spirit of chivalry.

Friendship seems to have been cultivated with uncommon ardor, and the demonstrations of it appear to have been frequently carried even to a pitch of romantic excess, which, is nevertheless affecting, during the time under our consideration. The Duke of Alenson, when flying from Paris in 1575, first clothed himself in the doublet of his unfortunate favorite and friend La Mole, whose attachment had recently conducted him to a scaffold, under Charles the Ninth[n]. It was not uncommon to neglect every species of attention to dress or ornament, even allowing the hair and beard to grow, in sign of regret for the temporary loss, or absence of a dear companion. When D'Aubigné, in 1583 was dispatched by the King of Navarre, to demand reparation of Henry the Third, for the treatment shewn by him to the wife of the one, and the sister of

Friendship.

Romantic testimonies of grief.

[m] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 61.

[n] Vie de Marg. p. 164.

the

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the other prince; St. Gelais, his friend, penetrated with grief, fell into a state of dejection, and permitted his external appearance to display the melancholy which he felt at the event. "On my return," says D'Aubigné, "to Pau, "the King was walking in the garden of the "castle; and he no sooner saw me, than he "instantly said to one of his gentlemen, Go "tell St. Gelais to shave himself, and to cut "his hair, since his friend is safely arrived."[o]

Conclusion. Reflexions.

This list of virtues, short as it may appear, includes all those which can be properly said to discriminate and characterize the age. There are however, many softer national features, of a doubtful or equivocal nature, which necessarily, from their minuteness, escape the research of history. It suffices to have marked the outline with an impartial hand; and to have endeavoured to convey a just, though an imperfect and defective idea of a period of time, which, notwithstanding the vices that deformed or debased it, will ever, from the magnitude of the events with which it is crouded, powerfully awaken the attention of the most remote posterity.

[o] D'Aub. Memoires, p. 991.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

Strahan and Preston,
Printers-Street, London.

DC122 .W94 v.4
The history of France, from the
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00022 0501